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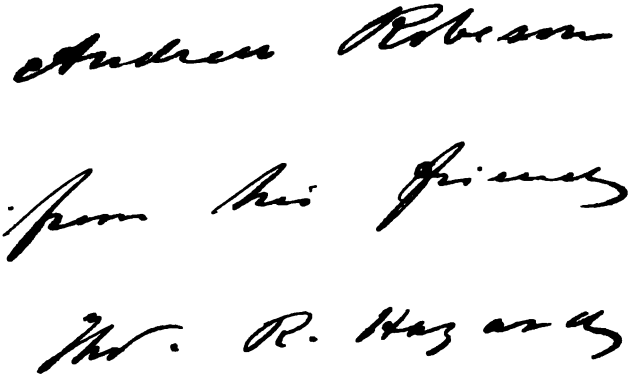

THE

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER

TRIUMPHING OVER DEATH.

A Narrative

OF THE CLOSING SCENES OF THE LIFE OF THE LATE

WILLIAM GORDON, M.D. F.L.S.

OF KINGSTON-UPON-HULL.

By NEWMAN HALL, B.A.

Που σου, Θανατε, το κεντρον.

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PREFACE.

PLEASING, yet painful, is the writer's task. It is a luxury, though a melancholy one, to watch at the bed-side of those whom we dearly love, to administer to their wants, and to share, and thus alleviate, their sufferings. When these offices of affection can no longer be performed, there is a sad satisfaction in still bending over the lifeless frame, and following it to its last resting-place. And when both spirit and body are withdrawn, is there not a similar delight to be derived from lingering around the memory of the departed, and picturing as still present, what, alas, is gone for ever?

With such feelings, the author of this narrative takes up his pen. Happy to be thus still associated with the dead, yet reminded by every sentence he writes, of the irreparable loss he has sustained. What was not the deceased to him! Counsellor, Companion, Friend, Brother, Partner in his studies, his pleasures, and his cares, one in public sympathies and literary tastes, linked in love to him as were the souls of Jonathan and David, and above all, Father, not merely to his other self, but by the tenderest, the most unwavering affection, to him also. Well may he say with the Patriarch Job—"Have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me!"

Another weight which painfully oppresses the mind of the

writer, is the deeply-felt incompetence to do justice to his theme. His object is not to eulogize the dead, but to benefit the living, by exhibiting the value of that religion which could so wonderfully sustain the deceased amid severe and protracted sufferings, and which enabled him to anticipate the future, with peace, and even with rapture. But the scenes exhibited in that chamber of affliction, no power the writer possesses is adequate to describe. He feels he can never convey a just impression to those who did not witness it, of the sacred halo which surrounded that sick bed. His hand trembles as it is put forth to the task, lest this remarkable testimony to the truth and power of religion should, like a valuable gem, be spoilt in the setting. Yet he feels it an incumbent duty to make the attempt, as no one else to whom it might be delegated could have the same peculiar qualifications for it, as one who for nearly a month was scarcely ever absent from the bed-side of the departed, and who, in claiming to be regarded as a faithful narrator of facts, can at least say—"We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

In humble reliance on the Giver of all grace, this volume has been prepared. It is now sent forth with earnest prayer, that He would accompany its perusal with His Divine blessing, and that He would bestow both upon writer and readers, a fulfilment of the favourite petition of him whose dying sayings it records—"O thou, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IS CHRISTIANITY FROM GOD?—WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY TEACH?—WHAT CAN CHRISTIANITY EFFECT?

Is Christianity true? What does Christianity teach? What can Christianity effect? These inquiries, the following record of the closing scenes of the life of a learned and accomplished physician, is designed to illustrate. His ardent love of truth, wherever it could be found, and his successful labours to attain it in almost every branch of science, fully entitle him to the epithet—"Philosopher." After many years of anxious investigation of the claims of the religion revealed in the New Testament, and the most fearless and candid examination of every scheme of scepticism, especially the materialistic, he confessed that the only true philosophy was the reception of the gospel as a little child. It was this, which, though he was called away in the very prime of life, in the matured vigour of his faculties, and in the midst of his usefulness, from all that can

make this world desirable and dear,—imparted to him that unbroken peace and indescribable joy, in the immediate prospect of dissolution, which gave to those around him the edifying and consoling spectacle of "THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER TRIUMPHING OVER DEATH."

Reader! have you ever known the inward battle which doubts and difficulties wage with a secret conviction of the truth; at one time leading you to the very verge of the dreary regions of scepticism, at another time associating your tenacious grasp of religion, with deep distress and painful anxiety? In the following pages, may you receive instruction! They contain the testimony of one who could fully sympathize with you, but who was enabled to fight his way from the midst of the conflict, to the peace of victorious faith.

Reader! with perhaps never a doubt of the divine authority of the Bible, have you often doubted your own participation of the blessings which it reveals; and have the thoughts of your guilt, frailty, and temptations, of the wrath of God, of death and eternity, cast a gloom over your spirit, and filled you with sad forebodings? From the following pages may you derive consolation! They contain the testimony of one, who, while deeply conscious of his unworthiness in the sight of God, and fully alive to the infinitely momentous consequences of death, found an answer to every

doubt, and an antidote to every fear, in the pardoning love of God, manifested in the perfect atonement of Jesus Christ. May the fulfilment of the promise, which he so amply realized, be the happy experience of all who peruse this volume—"Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Whatever opinion be held respecting its divine authority, and distinguishing doctrines, Christianity itself, is unquestionably, a great fact in the history of the human race. In its initial form, Judaism, it has existed from the very earliest ages; and in its more complete development, it has been acknowledged in a greater or less degree by the most civilized nations of the earth. Minds of the highest cultivation have bowed before it, and the mightiest intellects have done it homage. The poor have professed that it has made them wealthier than if all the riches of the universe were in their possession; while the broken-hearted have declared, that it has afforded them consolation, when all other sources of comfort were dried up. In connection with a cordial reception of it, the most extraordinary transformations of character have taken place; and savage tribes, beneath its potent influence, have, with marvellous rapidity, lost their ferocity, and manifested an advanced civilization. Christianity, therefore, is a great fact; and as such, unquestionably demands from every thoughtful mind,

a candid examination of its claims. Is it from God? If so, what does it teach? None can neglect these inquiries as unworthy their attention, and claim for themselves at the same time the character of philosophers.

How can satisfaction be obtained in reference to the first of these questions? We may point to prophecies fulfilled, and miracles performed, in connection with an unimpeachable testimony, and an indisputable chain of historical evidence, and say —Behold the proof! Or we may take up the authoritative standard of the religion, and referring to its elevating sentiments, its pure morality, its benevolent precepts, its adaptation to human wants and human woes; looking at the religion itself, so unlike anything else which man ever devised, so unlikely to have originated with man, we might say —Behold our proof! Or an individual might be selected, as an example of its operation—one who had candidly investigated its claims; who had profoundly studied the objections brought against it; whose deliberate conclusion, after such a course of inquiry was, that it possessed divine authority, and on whose spiritual nature a change was produced by the hearty reception of its truths, such as he declared no system of human reason, and no influence, less than divine, could have effected, and again we might say—Behold our proof!

Such is the nature of the evidence furnished by

the case of Dr. Gordon. And though such evidence may not be regarded as conclusive, when taken alone, yet in connection with, and in corroboration of, other proof, it is a legitimate argument. The actual production of a certain effect, must be one of the best evidences that the cause was adequate to its production. The human soul has been so constituted by its Creator, as to require for its complete satisfaction, something which Christianity professes to be alone able to supply. Man has, by sin, brought on himself a spiritual disease, and exposed himself to spiritual sorrows and fears, which Christianity professes to be alone able to cure and to remove. In connection with the satisfying these demands of human nature, it claims to be acknowledged as possessing a divine origin. If those pretensions fail to be verified, that claim must of course be disallowed. But if, while all other appliances are inadequate to supply the deep cravings of the human soul, Christianity is found to be more than sufficient for all its wants, this is surely some argument in favour of its claims. The confession of a mind which had the strongest desire, and the amplest opportunity for investigation, that the satisfaction it sought was to be found no where but in the Gospel, must be some confirmation of its truth. Some corroboration is given us in the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Such, in some

degree, is the influence of the reception of our religion by any mind peculiarly gifted. And such is the case here.

But, in immediate connection with the inquiry, "Is Christianity from God," arises another, "What does Christianity teach?" The two questions indeed cannot be separated, for the investigation of the second forms a considerable feature in the study of the first. But when satisfied respecting the former, then the latter inquiry returns upon us with increased weight of importance. For if God has indeed revealed his will to man, what can be more obviously our duty and our interest, than to possess correct ideas of what that will is? The reply of Dr. Gordon to both these questions will be clearly gathered from the reiterated testimony he gave on his dying bed. Nothing could exceed the strength of his confidence, that Christianity is from God—and that its essential nature is an entire renunciation of self, with an humble reliance on the mercy of God the Father, through the perfect atonement of the Son, by the aid of the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost.

The following narrative will also illustrate the effect which a cordial reception of these truths can produce. It will be seen, that while human philosophy was unable to give a satisfactory solution of the great problems of the soul, and while human

virtue was insufficient for a foundation on which hope might build in anticipation of a future existence, faith in Christ could satisfy every doubt, remove every anxiety, and impart a "peace which passeth all understanding."

CHAPTER II.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

BORN AT FOUNTAINS' HALL—RIPON—EARLY DEVOTION TO STUDY—OTLEY—EDINBURGH—WELTON—PLAN OF STUDY—RETURNED TO EDINBURGH, AND GRADUATED—SETTLED AT HULL—PUBLIC LIFE—TOTAL ABSTINENCE—PRESIDENT OF THE HULL CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE SOCIETY—LECTURES TO THE WORKING CLASSES—PURITY OF HIS MOTIVES AS A POLITICIAN—SACRIFICE OF PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS TO CONVICTIONS—BENEVOLENCE TO THE POOR—CHARACTER AT HOME—ESPECIALLY AS A FATHER——ILLNESS—VISIT TO HARROGATE—TO OTLEY AND FOUNTAINS—TO SCARBOROUGH—RETURN TO HULL—SUFFERINGS—COMPOSURE—DEATH—OBITUARY FROM THE NEWSPAPERS—PUBLIC MEETING FOR "A PEOPLE'S MONUMENT."

BENEATH the venerable ruins of the far-famed abbey of Fountains, majestic even in decay, surrounded by the loveliest scenery, and embosomed in the luxuriant foliage of stately forest-trees, stands the large ancient mansion called Fountains' Hall, in which the subject of this memoir was born, on the 2nd of August, 1801. His ancestors were all

highly respectable, moving in good society, and many of them distinguished by high literary attainments. The celebrated Daniel de Foe, was remotely connected with the family. From his parents, who were both possessed of very superior intelligence, he early imbibed that love for study which distinguished him through the whole of life.

He acquired the rudiments of learning at the grammar-school of the adjacent city of Ripon, where the amiability of his disposition, combined with his extraordinary mental abilities, commanded the love and respect of his schoolfellows. Very soon after his entrance, he was placed in the first class of the upper school; and being much younger than any of his class-mates, he was obliged to work very hard, in order to maintain his superiority. Though so young a boy, he often would sit up till one or two o'clock in the morning over his books, assisted by his mother in his favourite classical studies, in which he made great proficiency. He was especially distinguished for his elegant Latin verses.

After leaving school, he was articled to a general practitioner at Otley, where his blameless conduct, and his kind interest in the sorrows of those with whom his professional engagements brought him into contact, won for him universal esteem. He was there, as he continued through life, the friend of the poor. The author can never forget the de-

light and affection manifested by an humble cottager at Leighley, to whom Dr. Gordon with his family paid an unexpected visit, after an absence of twenty five years from the locality. The unaffected kindness of the youth, and his anxious interest in the affliction of that poor woman, so different from a merely official, hurried, and heartless visitation, had left an impression too deep for time to wear away. Nor was this a solitary instance, the author having ascertained from various quarters, that notwithstanding the changes which occur during so long a period, numerous are the households where his name is yet familiar and dear, and where the memory of his benevolent and lovely demeanour has lost none of its freshness.

His father was a man of most amiable disposition, and had a great love for scientific pursuits; but as is often the case with such characters, he was improvident, and his fortune suffered a reverse before the subject of this memoir had completed his studies. This, however, did not daunt him in his course. Fearing to be a burden to his parents, but at the same time determined not to lose any part of that liberal education, on which he had set his heart, he borrowed money, and was thus enabled, after studying some time in London, to go to Edinburgh, where it was his intention to graduate as a Physician. He was furnished by various friends, with letters of introduction to some of the first

families in that city: but only made use of one or two of them, in order that he might not be tempted to interrupt that plan of study which he had marked out for himself. Mr. McLehose, to whom he often referred with gratitude, received him always at his house as one of his family. Here he met with many congenial friends, whose society he much enjoyed, among whom was the 'Clarinda' of Burns, Mr. McLehose's mother, a person of great intelligence, who, though much advanced in years, retained all her faculties, and would often relate, with the utmost vivacity and humour, the adventures of her earlier years, together with interesting anecdotes of eminent characters with whom she had come in contact. But the pleasures which such society and kind hospitality placed within his reach, were enjoyed only as recreations, never being suffered to divert his mind from the one object for which he had entered the university. So great indeed was his devotion to study, that it was his constant habit to read till the clock struck three, before retiring to rest, and yet he was always in the college by eight.

There is little doubt that these habits, which were kept up more or less through his life, tended materially to undermine his constitution and shorten his days.

After remaining three years in Edinburgh, Mr. Gordon went to Hull on a visit, and had secured his place in the coach, in order to return, for the

purpose of completing the necessary term, and obtaining his diploma. But the day before he was to set off, he met with a medical friend, who strongly advised him to delay taking his degree, and to engage for a few years as a general practitioner: his youth, and very juvenile appearance, being much to his disadvantage as a physician.

Welton, nine miles from Hull, was recommended as possessing the attractions of a beautiful country, a wealthy neighbourhood, and every advantage for a young man under his circumstances. In consequence of this suggestion, he hired a horse, and rode over to view the place. It was a very fine morning in May; and every object looked so lovely and inviting, that he at once resolved to reside there at least for a year, that he might have the opportunity of continuing his studies, even if he did not succeed as he expected in his profession. He took lodgings that very day. His gentlemanly manners and cultivated mind, soon gained him the respect of the whole neighbourhood.

In 1826, he was married to Mary Anne, the second daughter of James Lowthrop, Esq., of Welton Hall. With a large circle of friends, a lucrative practice, and such an accession to his happiness, he did not hesitate to comply with her wish to remain at Welton for several years.

The following "system of study," dated August 1827, which was found among his papers, will

serve to illustrate the course of reading which he pursued at this time:—

Monday—Natural Philosophy.
Tuesday—Chemistry, Pharmacy, Mineralogy, or Geology.
Wednesday—Zoology, Anatomy, Physiology, or Surgery.
Thursday—Vegetable Physiology, Botany, Materia Medica, or Agriculture.
Friday—Pathology and practice of Medicine, or Midwifery.
Saturday—Languages, Logic, Moral Philosophy, Political Economy, or Algebra.

In 1828, he published a small volume on the practice of Surgery, and in 1832, a "Critical Inquiry concerning a New Membrane in the Eye." He also frequently sent contributions to Loudon's Magazine of Natural History, and to various Medical Journals. In 1832, he was elected a Fellow of the Linnæan Society. In 1838, he returned to Edinburgh, intending to remain there only the one term still necessary to complete his course of study as a physician; but the opportunity afforded him of giving his undisturbed attention to those scientific pursuits, in which he was so deeply interested, induced him to give himself, as he used to call it,

a holiday. He consequently remained there with his family, more than two years; during which time, he seldom retired to rest until two o'clock, though he was always ready to resume his studies at eight, and frequently attended an early lecture before breakfast, in the botanical gardens.

In 1841, he took his degree of M.D. with great honour, and settled as a physician in Hull. Here he devoted himself with ardour to the duties of his profession, still continuing his medical studies with undiminished zeal. But though surpassed by few in the diligent and habitual investigation of all branches of professional learning, and in the candid examination of the merits of every new opinion and discovery, he by no means confined himself to medical reading. "He intermeddled with all wisdom." He kept up the studies of former years; and for a long time the author enjoyed the privilege of reading classics with him daily, and was always struck with the elegance and accuracy of his translations. With natural science, in all its branches, he was familiar. Poetry, history, and oratory, were his delight in his hours of recreation. No topic of public interest escaped his investigation. Especially he studied deeply all questions bearing on the general welfare of the community, chiefly the working classes. To the subject of Free-trade, and of the Currency, he devoted peculiar attention. In nothing was he superficial; and was never

satisfied with anything short of the most certain information, and the clearest demonstration.

He was soon known as a public man; was elected a Councillor for the borough; and in various political movements took a prominent part, always promoting what he thought to be the cause of popular progress. Freedom in trade, education, and religion, parliamentary and financial reform, extension of the suffrage, peace, and other kindred questions, found in him an earnest advocate. To the cause of temperance he devoted much of his time and energies. He saw how great were the evils entailed on his country, and especially on the working classes, by intemperance. To this baneful source he traced most of the poverty, wretchedness, disease, and crime, which prevail among us to such an alarming extent. His benevolent disposition prompted him to do all in his power to check this great evil. The total-abstinence movement could not escape his notice; he studied it with impartiality, and becoming convinced of its truth on physiological as well as moral grounds, he at once adopted and advocated it.

In 1845, he was chosen the president of the Hull Christian Temperance Society. In connection with this association he laboured most indefatigably to promote the physical, intellectual, and moral welfare of the working classes. He delivered courses of lectures on various subjects, devoting

much time to their preparation; but always delivering the results of his investigations in terms so simple, and a style so lucid, that the most unlettered could understand him. Sciences, often the most forbidding, from the difficult terminology in which they are couched, when presented by him to an audience, lost all their repulsiveness, and the hearers were astonished to find, that what they had imagined to be so utterly abstruse, as to be beyond their comprehension, could be made so plain and simple. He delivered, during several years, a succession of temperance addresses, in which all the stores of his highly gifted, and richly furnished mind, were laid under tribute; and illustrations were drawn from every branch of learning, as well as from the objects of nature, and the occurrences of daily life, to give interest to the theme. Besides these, he delivered courses of lectures on Physiology, Botany, Optics, and the Currency, with many single lectures, of which the following may be taken as a specimen:—'A blade of grass,'—'A drop of water,'—'The bones,'—'The muscles,'—'The architecture of the skull,'—'The Cholera,'—'Preservation of health and life at sea,'—'The poetry of the Bible,' &c.

It scarcely needs to be said, that these lectures were all delivered gratuitously. They were designed for the benefit of the working classes; and though for accuracy, beauty, and solid value, they

were fit for any audience, however gifted, yet Dr. Gordon was never ambitious of any other auditors than the poor. It was for them he chiefly laboured, under a conviction, that to refine their tastes, and instruct their minds, was a mode of rendering them the most solid and permanent benefit. In these addresses, he frequently expatiated with great interest, on the illustrations afforded in nature of a designing Creator, and on the evidences of his power, wisdom, and goodness.

As a speaker, he was distinguished for the clearness of his statements, the force of his reasoning, the chasteness and vigour of his language, and the manly elegance of his delivery. Every word was so aptly chosen, that no other could be substituted for it without injury; and all his sentences fell harmoniously on the ear. An elegant humour often pervaded his harangues, which tended considerably to enliven his audience; and when he exposed falsehood, vice, or oppression, which alone ruffled the placidity of his temper and roused his indignation, the withering keenness of his sarcasm was only equalled by the crushing weight of his denunciation.

Although, during the latter years of his life, he was continually brought into public notice, and perhaps took a more active part in all political questions, than most of his fellow-citizens; yet, as the character of this memoir is altogether religious, the

author deems no special reference to his political life to be necessary. The opinions of those who read this narrative may differ widely, respecting the course which he thought it his duty to take; and the author would deeply regret, that any word should escape him, by which the impression of the religious testimony borne by his beloved relative, should be weakened. He therefore feels, that any vindication of his political life, and even the expression of any opinion on it, would here be out of place. He merely wishes to insist on the purity of Dr. Gordon's motives, in whatever he did. He believed that the opinions he held were not only wise, on the ground of expediency, but that they were a carrying out of the sublime morality and lofty principles of the New Testament. He often illustrated his addresses by quotations from the sacred volume, and frequently said, with a glowing enthusiasm, that "some day the Bible would be the directory of legislators, and that then the principles he advocated would be triumphant." To that incomparable compendium of law, "Do unto others, as ye would they should do unto you;" and to the command—"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you," he frequently referred, as containing the leading principles of his political creed. Whether his judgment in this matter is assented to by the reader or not, the fact remains, that his political life was regulated not by any mean and petty impulse of

faction and party, but by a sacred reverence to the highest of all truth and to the happiness of mankind at large.

Those who differed from him most entirely in sentiment, were compelled to admire the benevolence of his intentions, the sincerity of his convictions, and his disinterested avowal of whatever he believed to be truth. His benevolence made him political. He thought he saw that the lamentable condition of the working classes of this country, was owing to unjust legislation, and on this account he laboured so energetically to enlighten the public mind, and advance those reforms which he judged to be necessary, before any general and permanent improvement would take place. It was this made him so zealous an advocate of total abstinence. Though he was abundant in his acts of private benevolence, yet he saw that far more good would be done, by enabling the poor to help themselves, than by any acts of individual charity, and therefore he laboured to elevate their condition intellectually and morally. In this important work he spared no pains, grudged no time, and shrank from no sacrifice. Night after night he attended crowded meetings of the labouring classes, at which till a late hour, he toiled in imparting information, and cultivated a relish for intellectual enjoyments, in preference to the degrading pleasures of the dram shop; in instilling those ennobling principles of freedom and

independence, which might make them industrious, prudent and self-relying, and in cherishing that love of virtue and benevolence, which might preserve them from the evil influences of vice, rendering them happy in themselves, and the promoters of happiness in others. He often in these addresses referred to the Bible and religion in respectful terms; but, as will be seen in the latter part of this narrative, his great regret subsequently was, that he had not distinctly urged on his numerous hearers, the claims of the gospel, and its adaptation to bless in both worlds, all who cordially embrace it.

So uncompromising was his love of truth, that it never occurred to him, to inquire with reference to any principle or movement, "is it respectable," "is it likely to succeed," or "will it injure my worldly prospects?" His sole desire was to gain an answer to the inquiry, "Is it true." The course he thought it proper to take in public matters, was diametrically opposed to his professional interests. He saw the risk of losing, and to a great extent *did* lose, the patronage of those who were best able to remunerate his medical skill. Early associations, pleasant friendships, pecuniary advantages, all of which would have led him in a totally opposite direction, were to him as nothing, in comparison with truth. He refused to purchase any worldly good, and was unwilling to retain even the approval of those, in whose society he delighted, and whose friendship

he valued, at the cost of disguising his sentiments, and sacrificing his convictions. Independent of the opinions which might be in favour with the public, he asserted and enjoyed the right of free speech, as well as of free thought. He felt with Milton, in whose magnificent prose writings, as well as in whose poetry, he took the greatest delight, as holding intercourse with a congenial spirit—'give me the liberty to know, to utter, to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberties.' He regarded it a wrong done to society, for any man to conceal what he thought to be true and useful. He was always willing to hold friendly intercourse with men of all opinions, and never threw away kindness from whomsoever it might proceed: though to obtain it, he would not sell his liberty or his conscience. Often has the author heard him say, he should feel himself indeed degraded, if he occupied a position, however exalted, which his judgment condemned, and where he could not at all times both think with freedom, and boldly utter what he thought. He was eminently one who, to use the words of an eloquent living author, "dares to take up truth, when trampled on in the streets, and to say to all men, 'this is a holy and divine thing; foully as it has been treated, it is worthy of worship, and *I* am resolved henceforth to worship it.' A splendid falsehood may be riding by, in purple and gold, with all the world

prostrate before it; but when it says to this man, 'fall down and worship *me*, and say that I am the truth'—he straightway answers, 'I will not worship thee, nor call thee the truth; for thou art a lie.' "

The reader is again reminded that he is not asked to admit, that all the opinions which Dr. Gordon advocated were truth, but only that they were so regarded by *himself*. The outward splendour of any principle had no charms for him. Its being trampled upon could not make him ashamed of it. It was at a great and constant pecuniary sacrifice that he advocated the total-abstinence question; but the loss thus entailed on him, and the contempt with which some affect to regard the holders of those principles, only made him the more earnest in their advocacy.

Possessing the full confidence of the working-classes, his denunciations of violence, and earnest advocacy of peace, good order, and obedience to the laws, had such effect, that at a recent period of political excitement, no opportunity was given for the intrusion of those demagogues, who went about for their own selfish ends, to excite their deluded followers to acts of insubordination. Being remonstrated with, by many of his friends, on the imprudence of attending certain meetings at which he might be identified with individuals of questionable principles and character, he replied—'If they are

so bad, the more reason for us to go among them. Would you leave the people to the influence of dangerous men? If, because some are violent and unprincipled, you are to abandon instead of going among them to improve them, what hope can there ever be of their amendment?' Certainly such conduct, whatever else may be thought of it, manifested, considering his position in society, a manly disinterestedness which is seldom exhibited, but which all must admire.

In Dr. Gordon's manners, bearing, and language, refinement and taste of the highest order were always evident. He could not do a rude, a vulgar, or an unlovely thing. His sympathies might therefore have been expected to attract him to the more cultivated classes of society. But he thought that to do good, was far better than mere self-gratification; and therefore indifferent to the favours and opinion of men of his own rank, he cast himself as a moral reformer among the working classes. Yet in the midst of men in humbler grades of life, he never ceased to be the gentleman. He did not descend from his own level, but sought to raise others up to his. Courtesy and kindness pervaded all his intercourse with them; yet he was never familiar, and acting towards them with respect, he was ever treated respectfully by them in return. Haughty condescension may often receive the stern rebuke it merits; but Dr. Gordon proved that it is only ne-

cessary for a man of superior station, character, and ability, to treat the humbler classes with genuine kindness and courtesy, in order to secure from them a hearty respect and love, which are seldom found beneath the formalities of more polite society.

He was in a word, "The poor man's friend." Many hours every day were devoted to prescribing gratuitously for crowds of the indigent who frequented his house, all receiving from him the most kind and patient attention. Numerous were the cases in which he not only gave medical advice, but relieved the pecuniary wants of his poor patients; and meals were constantly provided in his kitchen, to be sent to the abodes of want and disease. In many ways of which the public knew nothing, it was his delight to render help to the needy, and this, so unostentatiously that his left hand knew not what the right hand gave. Many a heart breathed for him the prayer, which the author remembers a poor Irishwoman whom he had befriended, offering on her knees before him—"May the blessing of the Son of God rest upon ye." "When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; when the eye saw him, it gave witness unto him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he made the widow's heart to sing for joy. He was a father to the poor, and the cause which he knew not, he searched out." To how great a degree he gained the affec-

tion of the poor, was evident by the universal anxiety expressed by them, during his illness, and by the many thousands of true mourners who followed his remains to the tomb.

But it was at home and amongst his intimate friends, that the loveliness of such a character could alone be fully appreciated. There his equable temper, his unselfish benevolence, his kindness in little things, his constant endeavour to make all around him happy, endeared him to every heart. His servants loved him as a friend, as well as respected him as a master. He gave his orders rather as if requesting a favour than issuing a command, and never suffered the least service to be rendered him, without a kind acknowledgment.

In his company, conversation never flagged. There was no subject in which he did not take interest, and few on which he could not throw light. His pleasantry and wit combined with his affection, made sunshine and joy wherever he went.

His professional and public engagements occupied the day, while his studies were often continued far into the night. His pleasures were all of the domestic kind, and, as a matter of taste, irrespective of principle, he never frequented places of public amusement. A family party, a pleasant conversation, or a good author over the fireside, with excursions for half a day into the country, were his principal recreations, and frequent and

touching was his remembrance of them during his last illness.

As a father, all the tenderness of his character was peculiarly developed. His only child, who was born at Welton, in 1828, was his constant companion. He was her first instructor. When only four years old, he taught her the elements of Latin and botany, in addition to the usual subjects of early tuition. In his walks with her he sought to communicate useful knowledge respecting every object which attracted her attention; and to make even her writing lessons contribute to the furnishing of her mind, prepared for her a set of copies, enunciating scientific truths or great moral principles, in place of the frivolous sentences then generally employed for such purposes. Instead of treating her, as is too often the case, as a mere babe, to be pleased only with unmeaning nonsense, he made her his associate, conversing with her on subjects in which he was himself interested. He thought it a disgrace, that the education of ladies should be merely that of superficial accomplishments, and that it should be considered a mark of politeness, to avoid all scientific and argumentative subjects in their presence. He therefore laboured to expand his daughter's mind, and to furnish it with solid instruction. But all this was associated with a tender affection, seldom equalled, and never surpassed. As an example of this, during the two

years of her being at a school in the metropolis, not a day passed in which he did not write to her, generally inclosing with his letter, some botanical specimen, with a few sentences of explanation. However busy he might be, no engagement whatever was allowed to prevent this daily epistle, which was as affectionately prepared and dispatched, as it was eagerly expected and fondly prized. On her leaving school, he superintended her studies, reading Virgil with her daily, in connection with a course of general instruction.

Into all the preparations for her marriage, he entered with the liveliest and most tender interest; and when she left her father's for her husband's roof, it was no separation: for though the houses were two, the families were but one. Never was child, never was father, more tenderly loved. She was with him night and day, during the latter part of his illness, one of the most distressing circumstances of which, was the protracted parting of hearts so closely cemented by an affection so tender as theirs. Of a still dearer tie, nothing is said, because the feelings connected with it are of too sacred a kind for the veil to be uplifted. Suffice it to say, that he was everything to render this world a dreary waste without him.

It was in the spring of 1848, that the first symptoms of disease made their appearance. He complained of acute internal pain, which returned

periodically every morning, waking him from his sleep, and continuing about half an hour. This gradually increased in duration and intensity, though in the intervals he felt no uneasiness whatever. The disorder being internal remained to the last so obscure, that neither he nor his medical friends could arrive at any satisfactory opinion upon it.

As the summer advanced, he became gradually emaciated, and evidently weaker. All his professional and public engagements were continued as usual: but the lack of the vigour which always characterized him in health, was a cause of great anxiety to those about him.

On the 9th of September, he went with his family to Harrowgate, hoping that change of air might be advantageous. While there, he revisited the scenes of his early life. On one occasion with his wife, daughter, and her husband, he went to Otley, surveying the town with great interest, and on returning, spent a few hours at the house of a friend, whom he had not seen since he had left the neighbourhood when a youth. On another day, the same party went to Ripon, and Fountain's Abbey, walking over the scenes which had been so familiar and dear to him in childhood. How vividly will the writer ever remember his going into the old Hall, and pointing out the room in wnich he first drew his breath! Deeply was he interested and affected, and so were we all; for how could the distressing

fear be excluded, that the great weakness and severe pain he was then experiencing, might be an intimation that he was visiting those places for the last time. He frequently referred to this day, saying how remarkable it was, that after so many years' absence, he should have gone over the scenes of his early life, paying them a sort of parting visit.

At Harrowgate, he delivered his last temperance speech. It was a most lucid exposition of the physiological department of the argument, and produced a great effect on the audience.

On the 22d of September, he returned to Hull, the benefit of this excursion having been very transitory. For a few days there was evident amendment; but the emaciation which now became distressingly evident, had steadily progressed, notwithstanding the hearty appetite which continued with him to the last. On the 27th, in returning from seeing a patient, in Lincolnshire, he took cold, and was suddenly seized with very alarming symptoms, so that his speedy removal was apprehended, but he rallied sufficiently to go to Scarborough, on the 6th of October, on a visit to his brother-in-law, Sir William Lowthrop. Here he appeared at first to revive, but it was soon too evident there was no real improvement. He occasionally was so much worse, that it was feared he might never be able to return. He, however, bore his journey to Hull, on the 6th of November, very well: and even resumed,

to some extent, his professional engagements. This he continued to do till the close of the year, often spending two or three hours together in prescribing for his poor patients, when he was suffering agonies of pain.

What he endured during many months, none could know but himself. He spoke of his sensations as indescribably distressing; and would often rise from bed in the night and pace his room in agony, or endeavour to divert his attention from the pain by application to some abstruse study. Every remedy which medical skill could suggest was tried in vain. When his own prescriptions failed, he was willing to try those of others, but to no effect. His diet was frequently changed, but though he enjoyed his food, he derived no nourishment from it, and frequently suffered extremely an hour or two after taking it. He attentively watched, and often commented on the varying, but ever progressive symptoms of his complaint, and kept a tape for measuring his arm, and noting its gradual emaciation.

He was perfectly tranquil and composed, and seemed to have a full conviction that he should never recover. He employed himself, as his strength would allow, in arranging his papers, &c. saying, that he was putting his house in order. It was natural for his family and friends to make the most of every favourable symptom, anxious to put off, as much as possible, the conviction that his recovery

was hopeless. He often expressed his surpise that they should ever think him better, pointing to his emaciated frame, and saying, with much depth of feeling—'How wonderful you don't see!' The author can never forget one evening, in the first week of January, when sitting with him and Mrs. Gordon over the fire, he held up his thin hand, and after attentively regarding it for some minutes, spoke of it in the most touching manner, addressing it as the implement he had so long used in writing prescriptions, lectures, and speeches, and which had served him so faithfully, adding—'And is it so soon to return to dust? It will all be scattered and disappear. How wonderful!' The same calmness was manifested by him to the very last. His medical attendants often expressed their surprise at his uniform composure, and feared not to mention whatever was unfavourable in his case, as there was no danger of its producing the slightest change in his feelings.

Sunday, January 7, 1849, was his last day down stairs. On the following Saturday, as will be seen in subsequent pages, he was very suddenly seized, to all appearance with death. He in some measure rallied for a few days, but from this time sank very gradually; not suffering acute pain, though occasionally troubled with vomiting. His appetite remained, but his increasing emaciation was daily observable. His mental faculties and power of

speech continued in their full vigour, so that he was able to enjoy constant intercourse with his family and friends. His death took place on Wednesday, February 7. The concluding chapters of this volume contain a narrative of what occurred in his room, during the last few weeks of his life.

The author cannot but express in this place, the high appreciation in which Dr. Gordon and his family held the attentions received during his illness, from various members of the profession. Mr. Ingham, an eminent surgeon in North Shields, a very old and dear friend, though suffering extremely himself, rose from a sick bed to visit him, but was at once convinced he could render him no effectual aid. Dr. Ayre, his chief medical friend and adviser in Hull, was most unremitting and kind in his visits. Dr. Gordon was also much indebted to Dr. Horner, Mr. Twining, Mr. Craven, Mr. Becket, and other medical gentlemen, whose kind sympathy and anxiety on the sufferer's behalf, will ever be gratefully remembered by survivors as they were thankfully received by himself. The following article, from the pen of one of these gentlemen, which appeared in several of the provincial papers, after Dr. Gordon's decease, will be read with interest as confirmatory of the contents of this chapter:—

'Another great and good man has been taken away from the midst of us. The community at large, and Hull more especially, can ill-afford the

loss it has just sustained, in the lamented removal by death, of Dr. Gordon.

'Connected with a profession distinguished for its broad sympathies, high intelligence, and comprehensive charities, his was, nevertheless, no merely official character; his daily walk no ordinary routine. No professional training, however severe, no educational advantages, however great, would have necessarily produced a Dr. William Gordon. Of him it was peculiarly true, that to know him was to love him; and yet (owing, perhaps, to his love of retirement, and of domestic enjoyment) few public men have been at once so much, and yet so little, known as the deceased.

'Endowed by nature with a power of readily expressing himself in elegant and persuasive language, and at the same time identified in sympathy and soul, with every thing which he believed to be conducive to the physical and moral advancement of our common humanity, he was almost universally known as a public character, whose influence was peculiarly felt in the noble effort to efface one of the foulest stains from the national character—that of intemperance. This effort, however, required great moral courage; and, perhaps, excited prejudices which, otherwise, had never existed; as, assuredly, it would call forth in many a breast a gratitude, which shall endure when the one shall

be no longer required, and the other have long been forgotten.

'But it is chiefly as a man, as a physician, and a friend, that his name will be cherished and revered. The narrower circle of those who during his brief career, shared his professional services, and still more those who enjoyed his friendship and the privilege of his society, can alone fully know what the community has lost by his removal. That nameless charm which exalts and beautifies every other personal attribute, was pre-eminently his. Naturally gifted, frank in his demeanor, approachable, patient, sympathizing, intelligent, he was eminently qualified for the duties of a physician, for which a lengthened and diversified experience, a liberal education, and alas! a too sedulous application to study, further fitted him. That high humanity, which almost includes all moral excellence, was conspicuous in his general deportment, and together with a great openness, urbanity, and simplicity of character, rendered him an object of affectionate regard to all who really knew him,—especially to the poor, who have lost in him a sincere and sympathizing friend, and whose affectionate remembrance will form his best and most enduring monument.

'His death may be regarded as premature, and yet if length of life is to be estimated by the effecting of great moral results, by the large alleviation

of social misery and suffering, by the formation of friendships which death is unable to sever, and especially by the learning and showing to others, how to leave it, full of hope and love and humble confidence in the alone merits of our Redeemer—assuredly his life has not been too brief, nor his removal premature. During the whole of his lengthened affliction, the utmost patience, resignation, and consideration for those around him were conspicuous. The writer, along doubtless with other surviving friends can adopt the language of Young

> 'I loved him much, but now I love him more,
> Like birds whose beauties languish half concealed,
> Till mounted on their wing, their glowing plumes
> Expanded, shine with azure, green, and gold.
> How blessings brighten as they take their flight!'

'The writer well remembers him as one of the early supporters of the old Mechanics Institute, in Charlotte Street, where he listened with great interest to a popular course of lectures on physiology, delivered by him. He was known at an early period as an author, having published his 'Academical Examinations on the practice of Surgery' in 1828, and again his 'Critical Inquiry concerning a new Membrane of the Eye,' in 1832. In addition to these he furnished from time to time several interesting papers to the medical journals. His

writings exhibited originality of thought, along with elegance of style and a mastery of the subject.

'His practice was characterized throughout by a strong aversion to violent depletion, and to anti-phlogistic treatment, a feeling which is now happily becoming almost universal. His conversation betrayed great good sense, and was enlivened with a playful and delicate humour, and exhibited a thorough knowledge of men and manners, and true kindness of heart.'

'The writer (who knew the deceased well), feels that to say more would be perhaps to eulogize, which is alike unnecessary and offensive; whilst justice to the mournful event, demands that less should not be said.'

A few days after the funeral, at a public meeting which was very numerously attended, it was resolved to perpetuate the memory of so firm and fearless an advocate of temperance, peace, and social progress, by erecting over his grave a 'People's Monument;' towards which all classes were invited to contribute by a circular, from which the following sentences are an extract:—'The great aim of Dr. Gordon's life was to elevate the taste, and reform the habits, of the working classes. To this high object, the powers of his gifted mind, and benevolent heart, were most gloriously devoted. In these disinterested labours of love, he was cheered with the satisfaction that he did not labour

in vain; for hundreds of homes, once the abodes of intemperance and misery, are now blessed by temperance and peace. The hand of death has taken from amongst us this distinguished man; but not until he had won for himself the lofty title of the "People's Friend."'

At this meeting many interesting addresses were delivered, chiefly by working men, in which Dr. Gordon was spoken of in the warmest terms of admiration and gratitude; many interesting anecdotes, previously unknown to his family, being related, illustrative of the benevolence of his character, and his considerate kindness to the poor. A large sum of money was speedily obtained, chiefly in small sums, for the 'People's Monument;' a white marble obelisk, twenty-five feet high, which has been erected over the grave of one of a class, who, though they seldom obtain the admiration of their own generation, and though their names may be unknown to the next, are, if greatness is to be estimated by goodness and usefulness, far more worthy of remembrance, than the majority of those for whom nations raise splendid monuments, and whose names are emblazoned on the pages of history. The monument bears the following inscription:—'Erected by public subscription, to William Gordon, M.D., F.L.S.—The People's Friend. Ob. Feb. 7, 1849. Æt. 47.'

The foregoing chapter, in some degree antici-

pates the sequel. But this was necessary to the accomplishment of the author's design of furnishing in one place, a complete and condensed biography, so as not to disturb the unity of the following chapters, which are solely devoted to Dr. Gordon's religious history and the conversations of his dying hours.

CHAPTER III.

TWO CAUSES OF ANXIETY—DID HE BELIEVE IN CHRISTIANITY? DID HE FEEL HIS PERSONAL NEED OF A SAVIOUR?

Dr. Gordon numbered among his dearest connections and friends, many persons of earnest piety, who were deeply solicitous for his spiritual welfare. One inquiry, which some of them revolved with much anxiety, was this—*Does he acknowledge the Divine authority of Christianity?* They hoped the best, but not without painful doubts. His medical investigations had brought the question of materialism specially before his attention; and he had deeply studied all the philosophical objections of infidelity. It was known that he thought much on these subjects; that he was not a man to form his creed on that of others without examination; and that he would embrace no principle whatever, merely because his friends, or society at large, professed it. His love of truth compelled him to investigate whatever subject claimed his assent, and unhesitatingly to follow his convictions, at any cost of personal feeling. He was enamoured of demonstration. He

must have evidence, clear, tangible, irrefragable, for every thing. It was nothing to him that an opinion was sanctioned by antiquity, or general consent, or by the fashionable world; it was not sufficient that it was held by the wise and the good; he must be convinced for himself, and the proof must be complete.

Accustomed to demonstrative evidence in his study of physical science, it was a reasonable fear that he might seek the same kind of satisfaction in his investigations of moral subjects, and that scepticism might result from the disappointment which must ensue. In the demand often made for demonstration, it is apt to be forgotten, that there is no single action of life which is not performed merely on a balance of probabilities. No verdict given in any court was ever based on more than this. From the very nature of the subject, the argument in proof of religion can be of no other kind. Although that argument may be felt to possess a moral certainty, the balance of probabilities being so overwhelming, that the contrary hypothesis would be absurd; yet it must be admitted, as it was to be expected in the case of any revelation from God, that difficulties will occur to every thoughtful student, which, after all his efforts, he must confess himself impotent to solve, and mysteries which no power of human reason can enable him to fathom. It was feared that these difficulties might be effectual obstacles to Dr.

Gordon's reception of the gospel. He might be so determined to clear up every point as he went along, as to be detained for ever, on the threshold of the temple, and thus never enter the sanctuary itself—one glance at the inner splendours of which, would at once silence every objection, and prostrate the spirit in adoring homage to the truth.

In the course of his investigations, he frequently asked questions for the purpose of eliciting information, which engendered suspicions that he was not a believer in Christianity. There are many persons who, though secretly infidels, from motives of policy scrupulously disguise their belief under a profession of religion. Carefully avoiding any remark which might generate suspicion, they are often loud in their condemnation of those who give utterance to a doubt. But Dr. Gordon, being an earnest disciple of truth, and fearless of the opinions of men, exposed himself to injurious reflections by the very candour of his inquiries, and the frank confession of his difficulties.

It is a fine remark of Milton's, 'a man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believe things only because his pastor says so, or the assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy.'* There are multitudes of such

*Areopagitcia.

heretics in the world. They pass as genuine believers. But it is their very unbelief which preserves them from suspicion. Whatever may be the creed of their lips, their minds are torpid. Religion, for them, possesses no interest, and therefore prompts to no inquiries. "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." They have no doubts, because they have no convictions. But earnest faith stirs up many a secret foe, and provokes many a fierce assault. Few have attained to the highest order of belief, who have not first struggled with difficulties. Those who have eventually doubted least, have generally been those who have at some time doubted most. True spiritual life produces mental conflicts, by which, in the end, it is strengthened and matured· but which, while they continue, sometimes expose the combatant to the charge of scepticism.

Thus, the genuine believer, or one fighting his way to belief, has often more of the semblance of infidelity, than the infidel himself. He is in earnest, and anxious on the subject of religion. He feels its infinite importance. He desires to be fully convinced of its truth. This gives weight in his estimation to all objections against it. He longs to have them cleared up. He often talks about them, and perhaps puts them forward with such strength and earnestness, as to appear to be defending them, when in fact, his object is not to convince,

but to be convinced, by eliciting a satisfactory solution of his own doubts. This was the case with Dr. Gordon. His efforts to arrive at a full and intelligent conviction of truths, an unquestioning and heartless assent to which, satisfies too many, brought on him the imputation of scepticism. In all societies there is too much intolerance of opinion. Religious circles are not free from the general failing. Those who have few or no doubts themselves, are not always either the deepest thinkers or the soundest believers, but are generally the most impatient of doubts in others. And men are never wanting, who are ready to magnify and circulate any report which is disadvantageous to those who are eminent for their talents or position. Thus it became a somewhat general impression in certain quarters, that Dr. Gordon was not a believer in divine revelation.

But this was not the anxiety of those who knew and loved him best. The marked preference he always showed for the society of religious persons, where intelligence, candour, and courtesy, were combined with piety;—the respect he invariably manifested to the ordinances of religion;—the terms of reverence in which he spoke of the sacred Scriptures;—the admiration he often expressed of the benevolent tendencies of Christianity, and the sublime precepts of its author;—together with his habitual frame of mind and manner of life, were

sufficient evidence how mistaken were the opinions entertained of him, by those who had not the same opportunities of forming so correct a judgment as his nearest relatives. For his own part, the writer can truly say, that during nearly seven years in which he was his constant companion, he never heard a syllable from his lips which was inconsistent not merely with firm belief in, but with devout respect for Christianity.

The fear of those most closely connected with him was, that he did not understand and experience the true spirit of evangelical religion,—self-renunciation, and sole dependence upon Christ. And there was ground for this anxiety. The more outwardly wicked a man is, the easier is it to convince him of his need of a Saviour: although he may at the same time be quite unwilling to abandon his wickedness. And in proportion as a character appears faultless, is the difficulty of assenting to the humbling doctrines of the cross. Gross offences against morality are too obvious to leave any doubt of guilt. But the inward corruption of the heart, as beheld by an Omniscient God, and the defectibility of motive accompanying actions the most praiseworthy in the estimation of men, are not so easily recognized. The self-complacency and pride natural to us, easily persuade us that we are actually as faultless as our friends and neighbours give us credit for being: and thus, unconscious of

the "plague of our own heart," we are unable to appreciate, and have no disposition to seek the aid of the great Physician of souls.

There is a danger of estimating our obligations to our Creator, by the same standard to which we appeal before the tribunal of our fellow-men. We are apt to forget that in the former case we have to do with the infinitely perfect Jehovah, in the latter, with judges who are fallible like ourselves. We forget too, that man can only take cognizance of the outward act, while God "searches the heart," and "desireth truth in the inward parts." Above all, we do not sufficiently consider, that however faultless our conduct may be towards our fellow-creatures, there is a duty paramount to all others, which we owe to our Creator: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and soul, and strength; this is the first and great commandment."

All other obligations are subordinate to this. Failure here is the grand, condemning, capital offence; in extenuation of which, it is of no purpose to plead innocence of minor misdemeanors. And this is the great sin of the human race. "The God in whose hands our breath is, we have not magnified,"—"God is not in all our thoughts," though "in Him we live and move and have our being." This poison at the fountain, taints all the streams of conduct. This disease at the heart, en-

feebles and corrupts the whole frame. It was to atone for, and remedy this evil, that the Son of God became incarnate, and suffered on the cross. Through his atoning sacrifice we obtain forgiveness; and the Holy Spirit of God is imparted to renew and sanctify our nature. But so long as we are unconscious of our ruined condition, there will be no personal application by faith, for the salvation which is offered to us in the gospel.

This faith, which works by love and purifies the heart, will be exhibited in the appropriate fruits of righteousness. Love to God is the effect of believing in Christ, and the producing cause of love to man. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance." But natural disposition may produce much that resembles these fruits in outward feature. Though the motives prompting them greatly differ, the actions themselves may be similar. God may be as much out of the thoughts in an amiable, as in a malevolent action; yet there is much greater difficulty in being convinced that the motive is defective. The product of a benevolent disposition being often externally the same as that of faith, the inference is likely to suggest itself, that the producing cause is the same, or equally good. And thus there is a peculiar obstacle in the way of some men acknowledging their unworthiness in the sight of God, which those do not encounter whose lives are

glaringly at variance with His laws, although in other ways this disadvantage is more than counterbalanced.

In the case of Dr. Gordon, there was every thing to make those who were anxious for his spiritual welfare, feel that no ordinary difficulty was to be overcome. It was feared that the very excellence of his character might be a hindrance to his simple reliance on Christ. Speaking after the manner of men, he was perfect. Distinguished by an undeviating course of uprightness, benevolence, self-sacrifice, scrupulous honour, and ardent love of truth, such as are exhibited by few who have made the highest attainments in piety; often amazed at the spirit and conduct of Christian professors, who could say and do things, which he without such profession, loathed; having no relish for the pleasures of the world, and finding his happiness only in his studies, in his benevolent enterprises, and in the midst of his family, whom he gladdened by the streams of cheerful and tender affection, which ever flowed from his gushing heart;—was it not to be feared that he might find it difficult to acknowledge himself worthless in the sight of God, to come as a little child to the feet of Jesus to be taught, and as a hell-deserving sinner, to rely solely on his atoning sacrifice?

These two anxieties were more than removed. Most explicit was his avowal to the many persons

who visited him during his illness, that the Scriptures must have had a God of infinite wisdom and love for their author; most full and repeated his confession of reliance, not on his own righteousness, which he saw to be only filthy rags, but on the merits of a crucified Saviour. Abjuring the pride of human reasoning, he came as a babe to Christ for instruction; earnestly seeking, and happily experiencing the illuminating and sanctifying energies of the Holy Spirit, and casting the burden of his sins on Jesus, in compliance with his gracious invitation—"Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden"—he rejoiced in the fulfilment of the promise, "I will give you rest."

CHAPTER IV.

HOPEFUL INDICATIONS, AND ILLNESS.

ALTHOUGH it was not till the last few weeks of his life, that Dr. Gordon spoke of what was passing within his own breast, on the subject of religion, it would be a very erroneous inference that his was a sudden and death-bed conversion. He told the writer, that from a child, he not merely admitted the truth of Christianity, but loved and honoured it; and ever felt convinced, that the sincere Christian was the only truly happy man. But he spent many years in anxious investigation of infidel objections, and laboured by human reason, to arrive at a full understanding of the mysteries of the faith. His mind was often unsettled and disturbed on these important subjects; and even when his convictions became more established, he was for many years a stranger to that great change which takes place in the heart of every true believer, and of which Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It was by a very gradual process, that light broke in upon his mind. A considerable change in his

views had taken place, previous to his attendance on the author's ministry in 1842; else, to use his own words, 'I should not have felt such pleasure in listening to his sermons.' In the whole Church, there was not a more attentive hearer; and he often expressed the greatest satisfaction at the discourse, when the insufficiency of human virtues, and the absolute necessity of a change of heart and faith in Christ, were the most plainly enforced. He always loved the society of those Christians whom he believed to be sincere; though the inconsistencies of many professors, and the indelicate, obstrusive, and ostentatious manner of some in speaking about religion, frequently disgusted him. He always spoke in the highest terms of the literary beauties and elevated sentiments of the Bible, which he often referred to as containing the sanctions of his public conduct. On several occasions he took the sacred volume to meetings of working men, whom he addressed on the splendour of its compositions; and often in his conversation manifested his familiarity with its contents. In the chaunting of its sublime poetry, and the singing of hymns at the fire-side, he took the greatest delight. He was frequently alone in his private room, when there is little doubt he was occupied in devotion and the reading of the Scriptures, though he took the most scrupulous and successful pains to conceal the nature of his engagement. When he prayed, he truly "went into his

closet and shut the door, and prayed to his Father who is in secret." So great was his aversion to anything bordering on the display of personal religion, that he never uttered a syllable to indicate what was passing within his own breast.

There was no precise period to which Dr. Gordon was able to refer, as the time when he first became, in the full sense of the term, a Christian. Although, previous to his illness, he had been a 'disciple secretly,' yet that affliction was undoubtedly instrumental in nourishing and developing the spiritual life, which had till then existed in merely an embryo state. And it was only at the latter period of the disorder that he experienced the extraordinary elevation of mind, and uninterrupted peace and joy, which the following narrative details.

Few have been more favoured than the subject of this memoir, with friends to whom the words of the Apostle James are applicable: "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much." For many years there was not a day in which he was not made the special subject of earnest supplication at the throne of grace, by many, who, from a proper consideration of his well-known feelings, never obtruded on him the question of personal religion. It was natural, that as they saw him gradually declining under the ravages of disease, their anxiety to ascertain what was the state of

his mind on the all-important subject, would increase. It was felt that to interrogate him in reference to it would elicit no information, but very probably might seal his lips for the future. He said, on one occasion, to a beloved and anxious relative—'I cannot understand the religion which friends extort from people when they are dying, urging them to say, "I believe;" and thinking it sufficient if they can be induced to declare they have faith in Christ.' It was evident from such observations, that it would be injudicious to attempt to elicit any thing from him on the subject by direct inquiry. On this account, spontaneous remarks were the more eagerly watched for, and the more carefully cherished.

It was manifest for many months before his end, that he had no fears. Often, when the symptoms became suddenly more alarming, he would say, 'Remember, I'm very happy; I've no fear of death.'

A few words which escaped from him at Scarbro' in the autumn, were fondly stored in the grateful memory of her to whom they were spoken. He said, 'I'm very ill, but not afraid to die.' His wife having quoted the verse—"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ;" he responded with emphasis: 'And he has given *me* the victory. My views on

these subjects have been changed for many years, though I do not talk about it.' The account of the brazen serpent being referred to, as illustrative of faith in Christ, he said—'I've had my eye on that brazen serpent a long time.' His brother-in-law, Sir William Lowthrop, at whose house he was staying, introduced to his notice the excellent little work published by the Religious Tract Society, entitled, 'The Philosophy of Salvation,' to large portions of which, he listened with great attention, frequently expressing his admiration of the argument.

After his return to Hull, he made the most minute and considerate arrangements with reference to his decease, which he always anticipated as the result of his illness. While talking on these subjects so unavoidably painful, he would often say, 'Do not grieve; I feel so happy. It relieves my mind to talk on what so constantly occupies it.' Still he volunteered no further statement respecting the foundation of his hope; and as his friends had always endeavoured in the most effectual way, to manifest to him their own religious convictions, and their anxiety respecting himself, consideration of his well-known feelings, made them abstain from interrogatories which their solicitude might otherwise have prompted. His marvellous patience in suffering, and composure in the prospect of death, with his blameless life, and the few remarks he had

made, encouraged them to hope the best, though they were very desirous of some additional assurance.

Towards the end of the year he purchased a pair of thick 'over-alls,' as much for the purpose of concealing his extreme emaciation from his friends, as for additional warmth. A faithful attendant, entering the room as he was drawing them on, remarked, 'They'll think you're going a journey, Sir!' He replied, 'Yes, I am! and a long journey; but it is the happiest journey I ever took. It's a wonder to myself that I have no wish for this world. It's all very delightful, but I have no wish for it.' On another occasion, some weeks before he was confined to his bed, he said, 'I'm so happy! Indeed these two last days I've had such delight in the prospect of Eternity, that I've had to put it aside. It is almost more than I can bear.'

It having been remarked to him one evening that he had been particularly well on that day, he said, 'Yes, and I dare say you would not think it, but I have been enjoying the thought of my long journey, it has never been out of my thoughts.' This was the more remarkable, as he had been exerting himself to see several patients, entering fully into their cases, and receiving visits from various friends, with whom he had conversed, with his usual animation, on the general topics of the day. It might have been inferred from his manner, that he had

quite forgotten his illness, so much did his deportment and conversation resemble those of a man in perfect health, and in reasonable expectation of a long life.

During the second week in January, the first in which he was confined to his bed, his brother-in-law, the Rev. Edmund Russell, Incumbent of St. Mary's, Pomfret, had several interesting conversations with him, although he found Dr. Gordon still very reserved on the subject of religion. Of these interviews, Mr. Russell says, in a letter to the author, 'His words to me were very few, but full of affection, and always betokened a deep and increasing interest in the solemn truths of the gospel. Speaking of materialism, he said, 'I have studied the subject deeply; indeed I have read all the celebrated writings of Deists, and Atheists, and I would advise others to do the same.' I remarked, that I durst neither follow nor give such advice. Though as a minister, I might, if occasion required, take up such works as a matter of duty, yet as a *general rule*, I thought it neither safe nor wise, for any of us to try how much poison our constitution could bear. He replied, 'Yes, there *was* a time when I was beguiled by their sophistry. Then, I confess, some serious doubts arose in my mind; but they did not last long, and I have never been troubled with them since. Thank God, I have no doubts or fears now. I am not afraid to die.' He

also made special reference to the opinions of Lawrence on Materialism, saying that reading his arguments more fully convinced him than anything else of the unsoundness of the theory. All that could be said in favour of it, would be advanced, and in the most forcible manner, by so distinguished and clever a man. If then what even Lawrence could urge, was so inconclusive, he felt satisfied that the doctrine of Materialism was altogether false.

During this week, he was for several days more than ordinarily cheerful. He said one morning, 'I have been awake some hours, but I have been so happy, picturing myself in my coffin, and my funeral, with what you will all say and do.' Though he thus frequently spoke with calmness and pleasure of his approaching end, his friends were anxious to hear him state with equal explicitness, that this peace was not caused by any dependence on himself. Such an assurance, it was the privilege of the author to receive, when visiting him as usual, early in the morning of Thursday, January 11. After giving a few directions respecting the future, the following conversation took place:

Dr. G.—'I very much wonder you all avoid the subject of my death.'

N.—'It is too distressing to us. Besides, we cannot give up all hope of your recovery.'

Dr. G.—'But I do not wish to avoid the subject.

It is always in my thoughts. I had a happy day yesterday. Perhaps you would not think what made it so. It was the prospect of the delightful journey I am going to take.'

N.—'If we are trusting only to Christ, there is nothing in death which should make us afraid. ought not to be terrible to a Christian.'

Dr. G.—'Of course not.'

N.—'It is but going out of one room into another, to which our friends are soon to follow us.'

Dr. G.—'Not so. It is far better. It is a very *pleasant journey*,' (with great emphasis.) After a pause he added—'I am astonished it should ever be spoken of as a difficult thing for men to acknowledge their own unworthiness. When I look back on my own life and examine it, I see it has been a life of imperfection and selfishness. My best actions were unworthy, and a mixture of selfish motive was in my most benevolent efforts.'

Mrs. G. referred to a small volume containing the dying testimonies of eminent medical men, and alluded to Dr. Mason Good, who confessed that his own righteousness was but filthy rags.

Dr. G.—'That is my doctrine. Not because Mason Good said so, but because the Bible tells me so.'

Addressing the author, he added—'Perhaps you and others may have fancied I have not *thought*

much on these subjects, because I have not *said* much, but I have felt deeply, and for years.'

Here was the explanation of a character so marvellously excellent, that it would have been most difficult to account for it, on any other supposition than that divine grace was in operation to produce it. Without any verbal confession, there would have been sufficient evidence to justify a strong hope that he was a genuine believer. But his own declaration rendered this certain, and explained the almost unparalleled peace and joy which distinguished his latter end.

We cannot deny, that the Spirit of God may, and sometimes does, visit a sinner so suddenly and powerfully, that at once he is emancipated from the yoke of sin, and emerging from midnight darkness without any intervening twilight, into the full blaze of noon, enjoys a clearness and elevation of sentiment, together with a confidence in God and a joy approaching to rapture, which outstrip at once the experience of many an old believer. The secret is discovered without much labour in the investigation. The summit of the mountain is gained without undergoing the toil and pain of scaling its rugged sides. God thus teaches us what he is able to effect, and intends to humble us by showing that it is only by his grace that we are what we are. Yet this is not the ordinary method in which that grace operates. The process is generally more slow

and gradual. The spiritual birth, as well as the physical, has its anxieties and sore travail. There is often much toil in the seeking, previous to the much joy of the finding. So it was with Dr. Gordon. His was not a life of indifference to religion, closed by a sudden conversion and a few days of enthusiastic excitement. But after many years of earnest and anxious inquiry, with secret and constant prayer for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, together with a conscientious discharge of every duty, he was favoured towards the close, with such a view of the all-sufficiency of Christ to meet the sinner's wants, and was enabled by faith so fully to rely on his merits for acceptance with God, without one doubt or misgiving, that rising above the vapourous atmosphere through which he had long been climbing up the craggy cliffs of the 'hill difficulty,' he basked in a cloudless sunshine at a higher elevation than Christians ordinarily attain. The rare privileges he enjoyed were not realized without a long fight of afflictions,—the crown was not obtained without the conflict,—the kingdom was not entered but "through much tribulation."

CHAPTER V.

NIGHT OF DISTRESS.

SUDDEN ALARM—NIGHT OF APPARENT DEATH—NATURAL IMPULSE NOT RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE—MESSAGE TO YOUNG MEN—WAR—COLLECTS—CATHOLICITY—ADRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOUL.

On Saturday, January 13, Dr. Gordon seemed even more cheerful and animated than usual, so that it was impossible for his friends not to entertain some hopes of recovery. Though he remained in bed during the day, he was mentally as active as ever, reading, receiving calls, and attending to a few matters of business. At four o'clock, the writer left him conversing with his brother-in-law on various topics, with more than ordinary interest. But not an hour had elapsed, before the alarming message was received that he was dying. On hastening to his bed-side, the writer feared that all was over. The eyes were fixed—and a cold sweat was thick upon his brow. He had risen to have the bed made. While seated in the easy-chair at the fire, with only

his daughter in the room, he suddenly called for assistance, and directed the attendants to place him on the bed. Syncope of the heart had ensued, from suddenly assuming an erect position in his state of weakness. All the appearances of death presented themselves to his distressed family, as they hastened to his room. But while they stood anxiously round him, animation gradually returned. How great was the joy once more to listen to those lips, though in the faintest whisper, which it was feared were closed for ever without one parting benediction! After taking a little food, strength returned sufficiently to enable him to speak with comfort. Then he said to his brother-in-law, Sir W. L., 'If consciouness of my own unworthiness, and reliance on Christ alone, be a proper ground of peace, I have it, and have long had it. But you must not think that because I have not *talked* of these things, therefore I have not thought of them. I have long been feeling my way after the truth.' Expecting he was at the point of dissolution, he seemed desirous thus explicitly to assure us of the foundation of his hope. In confirmation of this, when the beautiful hymn was repeated—"Jesus, lover of my soul," which so fully expresses the sinner's helplessness, and the Saviour's grace, he responded with much feeling 'I reiterate all that.'

Dreadful agony now came on, arising from spasm of the heart. He frequently raised himself in bed,

and lifted up his arms in great distress, comparing his sensations to the effect of ten thousand screws tearing him to pieces. As his powers of patient endurance were remarkable, it was evident that the suffering which could cause such indications of it as were witnessed, must be of the most intense kind. He once cried out, 'O my friends, my children, can you do nothing for me? O my heavenly Father, help me! O my dear Jesus, take me!' Frequent vomiting, and the necessity of continually changing his position, added to his distress. But he retained most fully his self-possession, frequently feeling his pulse, making remarks on its intermittent character, and calling for remedies as the symptoms varied; often expressing his surprise that he continued so long. His intellect throughout the night retained all its clearness, his love all its tenderness, his consideration for others, all its delicacy. At intervals he spoke to those around him, recognizing all with the tenderest affection: and though suffering so much, was as attentive as ever to the comfort of others. He entreated his beloved daughter, who was very poorly from excessive excitement and grief, to sit down—and said to his brother-in-law—the Rev. William Knight, 'You've hard duty to-morrow, you had better go home.'

At one time, from the feelings at his heart, he considered he was in the act of dying, for he said earnestly, 'Come, kiss me, all of you, quick, quick,'

as though life might be extinct ere he had given us an individual farewell.

At intervals he made the following remarks: 'Remember this pain is only bodily. I've no fear. Is this because I've no dependence on myself, but am trusting to Jesus alone? If I come, will he reject me? And will he put those white robes on me? This is indeed agony, *torture:* but what a mercy that my *mind* is at perfect peace!—Remember me to my friends. I hope they will keep me in mind. I wish to live in your affections. I shall be with you. I shall be there to meet you.

He frequently spoke of reunion with those dear to him, his love to whom seemed to increase with his love to Christ and his hope of heaven. His human sympathies were not weakened by the strength of his religious emotions. The very contrary was the case. Being assured that he would still be with us, constantly in our thoughts, he said—'That's delightful. I wish to be missed. I should be unhappy if I thought it would not be so. You comfort me very much.' As we stood round his bed, his eye tenderly passed from one to another, and he said—'This is what I have often pictured to myself, as I have lain awake at night. I've seen it all just like this, and seen myself in my coffin, and you at my funeral.'

Referring to his past life, and the ground of his present hope, he said, 'My natural disposition led me to do many things of a benevolent character,

but this was not love to God. Mere natural disposition will not do. There needs something better for a holy God. I am quite unworthy, corrupt, corrupt.'

The distinction he thus made between impulse and principle is most important, yet it is one gene-ally overlooked. It is the motive which gives the rue quality to an action. Reason and revelation combine to require a universal reverence towards God. No act should be performed apart from the homage due to the Creator. "To love Him with all our heart," is our duty at all times, and in all actions. In the neglect of this "first and great commandment," no other can be rightly obeyed, and even if it could, compliance with a subordinate law can be no excuse for the neglect of that which is paramount to, and inclusive of every other. A deed otherwise good is essentially defective where there is the absence of this high motive. God is not honoured in it. Being forgotten, he is really dishonoured. The outward action may be most commendable in the eyes of society, yet may be only an additional evidence of the grand charge against the wicked—"God is not in all his thoughts."

Following the bent of mere natural temperament, is not love to God, when it prompts to the relief of the afflicted, any more than when it leads to the investigation of a scientific truth. The generous man may be as indifferent to his Maker's claims, as the

miser and the churl. One is far more useful to society, and more deserving of its approval and love than the other, and he has his reward; yet they may both be in the same condemnation at the tribunal of the searcher of hearts. The ordinary actions of life are criminal, when performed by one who is not "reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." Thus we are told that "the ploughing of the wicked is sin." The smallest act of love is more acceptable to Him, than the most scrupulous performance of religious rites, or the most profuse benevolence, when destitue of this motive. "Incense is abomination, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not LOVE, it profiteth me nothing."

But alas! how many there are, who in the absence of this love to God, trust in the efficacy of pious and benevolent acts. How often is a man's general amiability alleged as a good evidence that he died the death of the righteous! The very insensibility to the claims of God, which makes men so ready to build their hopes on their own kind actions, is one of the most striking proofs of human depravity. But when the Divine Spirit enlightens the mind to understand our obligations, then with Job we "abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes."

This was the case with Dr. Gordon. All who knew him, can testify, that if ever the hope of

eternal life could be based on the foundation of a blameless and benevolent life, it could be so by him. Yet most deeply was he sensible, that in all his actions, even the very best, he was 'corrupt! corrupt!'

Once, and only once, a transient cloud seemed to pass over him. He said, 'I don't see Jesus as I wish. I don't see him vividly.' But in less than an hour, his countenance brightening with joy, he said—'I seem to see Jesus now. He is vividly before me, waiting for me. He is here in all his love and mercy.'

The following hymn, which had long been familiar to him, and which at his request, was often sung in his room, was repeated—

There is a happy land,
Far, far away;
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day.
Hark how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour king,
Loud let his praises ring,
Praise, praise for aye!

Come to this happy land,
Come, come away!
Why will ye doubting stand,
Why thus delay?
On then, to glory on,
Be a crown and kingdom won,
Then bright above the sun,
We'll reign for aye!

Bright in that happy land,
Beams every eye;
Fed by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die:
Oh we shall happy be,
When from sin and sorrow free,
Lord, we shall reign with thee,
Blest, blest for aye!

He said—'I think I see it as it were before me! I am going to Jesus. I have embraced him, and he will receive me. Our best actions are filthy rags. There is pride and selfishness mixed up with them all. I have thought and written and done a great deal, but its all nothing. I feel the need of a better righteousness. It is in Christ, and so easily obtained! I have found it!'

The following hymn which became a great favourite with him, was now repeated.

Just as I am—without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee—
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot—
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—though toss'd about,
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within, and fears without—
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find—
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe—
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am—thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now, to be thine, yea, thine alone—
O Lamb of God, I come!

To this he responded with great feeling,—'O beautiful, that's the way I come.'

To the Rev. William Knight who had recently been delivering a course of sermons to young men, on Infidelity, he said—

'There is a great deal of infidelity in young men. You have many of them about you. Tell them from me, "I have read a great many sceptical books, ancient and modern, of all sorts. It is all very fine, but very fallacious. They are very plausible, but can give no consolation in a dying hour. The New Testament is the book. We must fall back on that. We can only obtain peace by casting ourselves on Jesus; putting reasoning aside, and asking him to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit."'

He gave a similar message to the author, who

said—'Such a testimony and such a scene as this, will, I trust, make me a better preacher.' He replied: 'I am glad of it. Preach with an *earnestness*. Tell the people of the peace, and the joy, and the happiness, and the calm. It's no use reasoning.' After a pause, he added: 'Preachers should dwell on the *mercies* of God. He is not a *severe* God. He is love.' Being asked if he could send a message to two young men, for whose spiritual welfare much anxiety was felt, he said, 'Assure them of my warm affection. Tell them to seek Christ, that he may pardon their sins, change their hearts and present them to God. Tell them that wealth, ambition, and fame are all vanity. Nothing will do but Christ.'

He had been for a considerable time deeply impressed with the conviction, that all warfare was anti-christian and inhuman, and often expressed his astonishment that any good men could fight, as the precepts of Christ seemed to him so decidedly to condemn the practice. The subject now presented itself to his mind with peculiar force. He said, 'How wonderful that men can go to war! how could I die now, hoping God would forgive me, if I would not forgive them, but sought to kill them in battle! How different is dying in my circumstances, to death on a battle field!'

Striking indeed the contrast! In the one case, calm, quietness, the presence of dear friends, the

voice of affection, the accents of prayer and praise. In the other, tumult, the roar of cannon, 'the thunder of the captains,' the fury of the combatants, the execrations and groans of the dying, rage, revenge, slaughter! Whatever may be said of the glory of dying on the field of battle, surely it is an awful thing for a man to be hurried from the excitement and din of conflict, into the presence of his Judge, fresh from the slaughter of his fellow-men, and accompanied perhaps by the souls of those whom he has just slain! Are the combatants Christians? Then they whose mutual relation to their common Lord, binds them to a special love towards one another, appear before Him, their last act on earth having been one of hostility even to the death. But if they are not Christians, then the blow which sent them into eternity, was one which for ever cut them off from the hope of salvation, which smote the soul as well as the body, and consigned it to eternal death. To slay a Christain is to smite Christ himself, to slay an unbeliever is to plunge a fellow-being into hell. Terrible alternative! Yet all who fight, not only strike such a blow, but expose themselves to the risk of dying in the very act of striking it. May all Christians soon acknowledge the universal obligation of the command, "Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you!" Without waiting for others, may they at least, by obeying the

precepts, fulfil the predictions of the sacred book, and "beat their swords into plough-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks," thus manifesting that Christianity is indeed, as the angels heralded it, "Peace on earth, and good will to men!"

Dr. Gordon continued to suffer severe pain, and was in such a state, that any moment might be his last. As we stood round him, expecting his immediate dismissal, he raised his head, and with a solemnity of manner, which will never be forgotten, said, 'I will tell you a prayer I have always been fond of. I have often used it. It is short, and so comprehensive. "O Thou, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord."' Then, turning to his wife, he affectionately said—'Remember, love, what a favourite this was.' He afterwards marked for her some collects in the Common Prayer-Book, which were particularly admired by him.

This was an evidence, that he had long felt the need, and earnestly sought the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit. And who that is an earnest seeker, will ever be disappointed, so long as the promise of God assures us—"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children,

how much more shall your Father, who is in Heaven, give his Holy Spirit unto them that ask Him." It also showed that he could admire and love the good and the true, wherever found. His opinions on ecclesiastical subjects were very decided. He stated, that they were more confirmed than ever as he drew nearer to his end. Yet it was evident, that he discriminated between essential Christianity and its forms, and recognised the truth of God, and resemblance to Christ, wherever exhibited. This obviously ought to be the temper of every Christian, and to be looked for as a matter of course. Yet how lamentably does a sectarian spirit narrow the sympathies of multitudes! Too many are apt to look upon their own, as exclusively the Church of Christ, and to regard all beyond its pale, as wanderers from the true fold. They avoid co-operation with those who are not of their party, and are as blind to the excellences of other churches as to the defects of their own. But amongst all Christians, are to be found evidences of the presence of the great Head of the universal Church, and of the Comforter, whom He promised to send, to abide with his people for ever. In proportion as we have evidence of "the mind that was in Jesus," dwelling in any one, whether of our own church or not, we are bound to recognize a brother in Christ, a fellow-heir of glory. Perfect uniformity of sentiment can scarcely be ex-

pected in the present state. It did not exist in the times of the Apostles. They, themselves, tolerated and sanctioned discordant judgments. (Romans xiv.) "Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." How much more united, happy, and useful, would Christians be, if, while conscientiously differing on minor points, and frankly, and even earnestly discussing those differences, (for they should be earnest, wherever they think the truth, and therefore the honour of their Master is concerned,) they still recognized the features of their common Lord, under whatever garb, rejoiced in each other's zeal, holiness, and success, and thus proved that their very controversies were prompted only by love to the truth, and anxiety for each other's spiritual good. Then an outward uniformity would be far from being necessary to the accomplishment of the Saviour's prayer—"That they all may be one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

Dr. Gordon addressed most of those who were around him, individually, and bade them an affectionate farewell. To F. L., one of his nephews, he said, 'Seek Christ. Don't be carried away by the world. It's all vanity. It will not comfort you at death. This can only be found by trusting in Christ. You may forget this. I have heard these things often and forgotten them, but it is all true.'

To another nephew, T. S. R., he said—'Good bye, my dear boy. You learn Latin. Let me tell you what Adrian said to his soul in prospect of death. You may, perhaps, read it some day:

'Animula! vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca—
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?'*

He then said, 'I will translate it for you; "Kind little wandering soul, companion and guest of my body, into what places art thou now about to depart?" And then Adrian goes on to say, how dreary and forlorn it will be. O, my dear boy, remember what a much better hope the gospel gives your uncle.'

It was very remarkable, to hear a man, suffering severe agony, and in expectation of immediate death, so correctly quoting, and so beautifully translating a Latin author, for the purpose of impressing an important truth on the mind of a little boy. In all he said, he studied to adapt himself to the peculiar cases of those whom he addressed. And there was such a calm solemnity, and so much affection in his manner, while all he said was so evidently uttered from the very depths of his heart,

* The verses ascribed to Adrian, are found in the fragments of Spartian. His life of Adrian is one of the few of his memoirs extant.

that these dying admonitions can never be forgotten by those who were privileged to receive them.

With similar remarks, in the brief intervals of pain, the night wore away, and to the surprise of every one, the Sabbath light dawned on our yet living friend. It had been throughout a season of mingled anxiety, grief, and joy. To witness sufferings like his, and be unable to relieve them, knowing too that very soon we must part from one so beloved, and now more dear than ever,—was a cause of the deepest distress. Yet to hear such delightful reassurances of his peace, and a clear confession of reliance on Christ as the cause of it, from lips which had hitherto been sealed on the subject; to witness so wonderful an answer to our prayers, and to see death entirely disarmed of his sting, and despoiled of his terrors, so filled every heart with grateful joy, that it would be difficult to determine whether grief or gladness preponderated. The full development of the spiritual birth was given us, as an antidote to the shock of physical death. As angels rejoice over a sinner that repenteth, so did we rejoice over him. He was leaving earth, but he had been evidently fitted for heaven. Who would not willingly have surrendered him with so blessed a hope, rather than have retained him for the longest life without it? It was a night of weeping. But we could not "sorrow as those that have no hope."

CHAPTER VI.

FROM SUNDAY, JAN. 14, TO SUNDAY, JAN. 21.

RALLIES—LONG FAREWELL—NUMEROUS VISITS—FIDELITY OF THE RECORD—VARIOUS CONVERSATIONS—ANTICIPATION OF HEAVEN—AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF EARTH—DESIRE TO PUBLISH THE GOSPEL—HINTS ON PREACHING—EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY—HINDRANCES TO AN INQUIRER—INCONSISTENCIES OF PROFESSORS—CHRISTIANS AFRAID OF INVESTIGATION—CROMWELL'S LETTERS—MURAL TABLET—INTERESTING ARGUMENTATIVE DIALOGUE ON THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY—IMPOTENCE OF HUMAN REASON—PHARAOH'S HEART HARDENED—HIEROGLYPHICS—'MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND'—EVANGELICAL TRUTH—A PHYSICIAN'S OPPORTUNITIES OF PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL—MAKING A COMPANION OF GOD—HERBERT'S HOLDFAST.

In mercy to survivors, Dr. Gordon was spared for more than three weeks, after the trying scenes of the preceding night, during the whole of which time his mental faculties retained their full vigour. The violence of his pain abated, and he was enabled to enjoy constant intercourse with his friends. He loved to have his family always around his bed,

and to spend his waking hours in reciprocations of affection, and conversation or reading on the great themes of the love of Christ, and the glories of Heaven. This respite was an inestimable boon to those most dear to him, enabling them both to hear and to say much, for which there would have been no opportunity, had he been taken from them by the sudden attack of the 13th. There is a sad satisfaction in a deliberate farewell, previous to a long separation, the loss of which is the greatest evil connected with the sudden death of a Christian. But this privilege was fully enjoyed in the present instance, and a rich legacy of love and piety bequeathed to survivors, more precious than any worldly wealth.

Many besides his immediate connections, shared in the privilege of conversing with him on his dying bed. He saw all who desired an interview, delighting in the opportunity thus given him of commending that Saviour, who had in so remarkable a degree, given him "the peace which passeth all understanding." He received nearly three hundred visits, during the last three weeks of his life, from persons of all ranks; but whether rich or poor he welcomed them with equal courtesy, saying something appropriate and kind to each, and pointing to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." The writer need not fear the charge of exaggeration, when there are so many persons who

can testify, that no description can convey an adequate idea of the calm serenity, the vigorous intellect, the affectionate manner, and the joyful hope manifested by the sufferer. Words are impotent to depict that sick room, which, to use the words of the Rev. Dr. Dobbin at the funeral, was 'not at all the chamber of death, but the robing-room of Heaven.'

We were anxious to catch every thing he said, that we might treasure it in our memory as a solace for the season of bereavement, and a feast for future years. It was originally for this purpose, but afterwards for a more extended use, that the writer took short-hand notes of almost every thing that Dr. Gordon said, during the time he was confined to his bed. This was difficult to accomplish, as it was necessary to avoid the observation of his keen eye, which scarcely anything eluded, for had he known that a record was kept of what he said, the freedom of his communications would have received a great check. But by the position in which the author sat, he was able to secure a faithful record of what passed, without any suspicion on the part of his beloved father-in-law. This statement is necessary, in order to account for the length and number of the conversations recorded, and to correct the inference likely to be drawn from the precision and beauty with which many of Dr. Gordon's sentiments are expressed, that the phraseology was the result

of subsequent careful revision, and not the unpremeditated utterance of a dying man. The biographer assures the reader, that the words, as well as the ideas, are Dr. Gordon's own, whose extemporaneous expressions were usually marked by the accuracy of studied compositions. To show the connection of what he said, the remarks of others are occasionally recorded, though with a brevity which will account for whatever abruptness may be observed in the dialogue.

January 14. The severity of the pain having abated, the beloved sufferer fell into a doze. During the whole of this day, he seemed gradually sinking from extreme exhaustion; so that, as far as our feelings, and his own, were concerned, it was still a dying scene. Indeed, this was the case till his death actually occurred; for, notwithstanding the occasional variations in his symptoms, he knew that the result was inevitable; and we were assured, both by himself, and the medical friends who visited him, that his departure might take place at any hour. This imparted to every thing he said, the interest of a last utterance. But though on the verge of the other world, and longing to be with Jesus, his tender heart clung to the objects of earthly affection. The sensibilities of the man shone forth the more brightly, in the hope and joy of the Christian. He delighted to be reassured of our affection, and to talk over the happy scenes of former years; but

said, 'I am going to a better country.' He sent kind farewell messages to many friends. Among others, to the author's father, the writer of the well-known Tract, 'The Sinner's Friend,' he sent this salutation—'Assure him of my strong affection; tell him I'm the sinner, and that I've found the Friend.'

He requested that a nice spot should be selected in the cemetery for his grave; and that there might be flowers planted upon it. It was remarked—'This is a bright sunny day.' He replied—'Yes, but I shall have a brighter one next Sunday.' In kind consideration to our feelings, he endeavoured to prepare us for the contortions of the features, which sometimes accompany death, and said—'You will see a slight movement in my face, but don't be alarmed, for there will be no pain. I've been thinking how busy you will be about my funeral; but I shall be far away.' Suddenly stretching out his emaciated hands, and somewhat raising his head, his countenance beaming with rapture, and his eyes gazing, as on some vision of beauty and splendour, he said—'I see that bright region spread before me, where there is no night, and where no heat scorches. And I see Jesus too; he is waiting to receive me!' Then after a pause—'It would not do for a worldly mind to enter. It could not enjoy heaven. There must be a change. The way to be prepared, is by self-abasement, and reliance on Christ.'

Mrs. G.—'Then it is reliance on Him, that has given you so much peace in all your illness?'

Dr. G.—'Oh! yes; it is being found in Him. Though I have not made a profession, it was not because I was *ashamed* of Christ. But what chiefly deterred me, was being so often shocked at the conduct of professors.'

Mrs. G.—'I hope you may live another night that I may nurse you; but you experience that it is—

'Sweet to lie passive in his hands,
And know no will but his.'

Dr. G.—'Yes! and cast every thing on Him—*cast every thing on Him!*'

Monday, 15. Soon after waking, he asked that some Shrewsbury cakes might be sent for. When they were brought, though he only ate part of one, he regarded them with much interest, and said—'They were my favourites at school; I often spent my pocket money in them.' Many similar incidents occurred, illustrating the affectionate remembrance he cherished of former years. Though so near the heavenly land, which by faith he beheld so earnestly, he cast many a loving, lingering, look backward on the scenes of his pilgrimage; recalling past enjoyments, and especially delighting to refer to any circumstances which identified him with those he most dearly loved. He seemed to live his

life over again in pleasant reminiscences; leisurely surveying and bidding it adieu. Far from regarding this world as a barren wilderness, without one flower to cheer the weary traveller, he looked on it as stored with happiness by a God of love; and his joy in departure arose, not from any weariness of it, but from a conviction that to be 'with Jesus was far better.' His own words, on his sister, Mrs. R., entering his room this morning, were—'I cannot express the joy I feel. I can leave you all, though no one has loved you more than I have done, or loved life more. It is all nothing to me. I am such an unworthy creature. God has been so gracious, and to *me*, more than any one.'

He did not think a Christian should cease to love this life, because he hopes soon to enjoy a better. In reference to his residence, in furnishing which he had taken great interest, and exhibited an elegant taste, it was remarked by his wife, 'You will leave your beautiful house.' He said, 'Ah! I hoped to get round it, but I have not been able. You must go round for me.' Some one said, 'But you have a better house to go to:' to which he promptly replied, 'Yes—but I am not talking of that now. The things are separate. *Now* I wish to talk of *this*. You'll look at the rooms, and think of me? Talk to me a little about it.'

At different times, he said—'As I get weaker, my faith and prospects are stronger and brighter.

The way to have strong faith is, to think nothing of yourself.—You have come to see me; I have many friends, but there is none comparable to Jesus.—I thought I should have lived many years, but how little we know! And if I were to live twenty years more, perhaps my friends might be gone, and I might have no consolation like this, in having them all around me.—I have no desire to get better, except to be of use in propagating the gospel; I would mix it with my practice. If I lived, it would be my whole delight to publish Christ.' To the pew-opener, he said—'I am going to heaven, and hope to see you there. Seek Christ! I see my own unworthiness, and am trusting only to Him. Remember me kindly to your wife; I hope we shall all meet.' He forgot no one, and made minute inquiries respecting the relations of those, among his visitors, who were in humble circumstances of life; mentioning them by name, with some message of affectionate interest in their welfare.

To a lady from Welton, who told him how much his friends there loved him, and would cherish his memory, he replied—'Tell them all what Christ has done for my soul. He is waiting for me. I am very happy. Christ is all. Say to my friends, how much I am indebted to them for their prayers.' The willingness of Christ to save at the eleventh hour being mentioned, he rejoined—'Ah! but it has not been the eleventh hour with *me*.' The woman being

referred to, who touched the hem of Christ's garment, he said with great emphasis—'But I have *embraced* him, and wish to be like him.'

To Sir W. L.—'I have just been thinking I shall be looking down from those happy realms on you, toiling with the storms and winters of life. I only regret I have not seen earlier that glorious gospel as I now see it, so as to have preached it to the multitudes of men I have addressed. If restored, nothing should I rejoice in more than this; I should never be ashamed of Jesus; I would preach Him to all. An infidel once said to me, after hearing N. preach, that if he believed such things, he could never cease praying for, and pleading with the people. That is just as I feel I should do, if I were spared. My physical strength might not be sufficient, but as to the interest and delight of it, I should never tire. At Harrogate, I met a son of Mr. W., and was disposed to smile at him, for relinquishing a lucrative business, in order to preach the gospel. But I could delight to do the same thing now. I could relinquish every thing for this. Not that I think worldly business incompatible with religion, but from the pleasure the other would afford me; I could do it with a zeal which would surprise myself.'

Being asked by the author, if from his own judgment, as an attentive and inquiring hearer, he could give him any hints as to the best method of preach-

ing, he said—'Preach earnestly, and simply, so as to be understood; but the best preaching is sincerity, and a consistent life. Men think much more of that than anything, there is no influence without that. I would not listen to a man whose life was inconsistent, though he were as wise as Solomon.'

N.—'What do you consider the best method of presenting the arguments in favour of Christianity?'

Dr. G.—'I think little of evidences; Scripture is its own evidence—the great truths it contains. Men grant the truth of Christianity. Preaching evidences is like putting up a man to knock him down.'

N.—'You always acknowledged the historic truth of Christianity?'

Dr. G.—I did more, I loved and honoured it, and always felt the religious man was the happiest man; though I did not feel as I do now—the need of Christ for myself.'

N.—'What were your principal hindrances?'

Dr. G.—'Above all, the inconsistencies of professing Christians. I have met with persons who could propose and approve measures, from which I revolted. The folly and injudiciousness of some Christians in their mode of talking of religion, was another impediment; also the intolerance of many. I always thought seriously of religion, daily. I was very anxious about it. This made me ask questions I should not otherwise have thought of

But the very questions were put down as infidelity. Often in the company of professing Christians, I have not dared to make free inquiries. This looked like a fear of truth, and as if they distrusted their own religion. I remember delivering once, some lectures on Physical Education, to which some one replied on behalf of Christianity, as if my views impugned it—as if the science and the religion could not both be true.'

Worthy of deep consideration are these remarks. The conduct of professors is narrowly observed. If there is any indication that they themselves do not firmly believe, or are not influenced by their faith, the effect cannot but be injurious. Instead of manifesting alarm, when startling discoveries are made, and denouncing such inquiries as having an infidel tendency, Christians should ever be among the most earnest friends of free inquiry. They have nothing to fear from the fullest investigation. They are not called upon to descend from the high elevation of an established truth, to prove its reconcileableness to every new hypothesis. Let Philosophers first settle among themselves, what is the truth in science, and Christians need be under no alarm that it will be at variance with the Bible. The God of revelation is the God of nature. He cannot contradict himself. Hitherto, every science, the more fully it has been investigated, has the more clearly confirmed the sacred Scriptures. It is only a limited

and imperfect knowledge, which suggests discrepancies.

Our interpretations of both the great books of God, may be false, but the declarations themselves cannot be. A deeper philosophy or a sounder criticism, will ever prove an additional bulwark of the truth. To shun the philosopher as a foe to religion, and to feel alarm at the progress of scientific discovery, manifests a very defective faith. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

Still more important is a consistent life. Men judge of a system more by the actions of its adherents, than the nature of its doctrines. Not that such reasoning is always legitimate. Advocates of liberty may themselves be tyrants, and eulogists of virtue be votaries of vice. Christianity, estimated by the character of its author, and the tendency of its doctrines, would still be a religion of love, though all its disciples were murderers. The inconsistency proves a false profession, not necessarily an ineffective or injurious creed. Still, the inference, being easy and plausible, is general; and if the holiness of professed Christians is influential in favour of their religion, the effect of a contrary character will generally be the reverse. When those who are regarded as converted men manifest a violence of temper, a rudeness of demeanour, an unkind and unforgiving spirit, a grasping and covetous disposition, a meanness and unfairness in their

dealings, from which many men of amiable temper and a keen sense of honour, though without any profession of piety, revolt; is it not likely that the latter will be encouraged to think lightly of a religion which seems productive of so little fruit? Or if the true distinction is made, must not such inconsistency tend to deter from "that confession of Christ before men," which is as expressly enjoined, as it is calculated to confer important benefits on the individual himself, on the Church, and on the world?

To "name the name of Christ," and not "depart from iniquity"—to pay the homage of the lip, but "in works to deny Him," is an insult to God, and an injury to man, too seldom considered in this age of profession. It is only when Christians are "living epistles, known and read of all men,"—when the visible preaching of the church corroborates the oral preaching of the pulpit, and the daily life of its members presents a manifest transcript of the principles of its great Head, that any extensive and permanent effects are likely to follow from the publication of the gospel. Whatever the learning or the eloquence which may characterize it, preaching must ever be essentially defective, unless the whole church, as with a mighty, consentaneous voice, responds by its obvious acts to the word spoken. Then, and not till then, will that word, as of old, "have free course and be glorified."

Tuesday 16th. On awaking, he said, 'Read to me something about Heaven.' Having listened to Bunyan's incomparable description of the passage of the pilgrims through the river, and their entrance into the celestial city, he said, 'Its not half so beautiful as I have pictured it to myself.' Various selections from the Bible, and Hymns descriptive of the heavenly state, called forth frequent expressions of the delight he felt in the prospect of soon realizing it.

His son-in-law mentioned his intention of having a mural tablet placed over his seat at church, and said the inscription should record that he was the friend of the working man, adding, after a pause, 'and that your whole trust was in Jesus.' To this he earnestly responded, 'O yes, say that—be sure you say that!'

N.—'Then you are anxious for Christ to be extolled?'

Dr. G.—'O yes—that's it, that's it!'

How well he had learned that truth which none can experimentally know but by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, 'in me dwelleth no good thing!' In conformity with his wish that Christ should be extolled, the tablet bears the following inscription:—

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM GORDON, M.D: F.L.S.

BY A COURSE OF VARIED PHILANTHROPY,
AND BY SELF-DENYING DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS,
IN THE ZEALOUS ADVOCACY OF THE PRINCIPLES OF
LIBERTY, EDUCATION, PEACE, AND TEMPERANCE,
HAVING EARNED FOR HIMSELF THE DISTINGUISHED TITLE OF
'THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND,'
HE RESTED FROM HIS LABOURS, FEB. 7, 1849. AGED 47 YEARS.
AFTER MANY YEARS OF ANXIOUS INVESTIGATION,
HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE ONLY TRUE PHILOSOPHY
WAS THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL IN THE SPIRIT OF A CHILD.
FAULTLESS IN THE ESTIMATION OF THOSE WHO KNEW HIM BEST,
HE CONFESSED HIMSELF TO BE THE 'CHIEF OF SINNERS.'
FINDING SOLID PEACE, AND TRIUMPHING OVER DEATH,
BY SIMPLE RELIANCE ON HIM WHO SAID:—
"COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN,
AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."

To W., a pious working man, who had always manifested great respect for him, and who called this morning to bid him farewell, he said, 'You see me better than you ever saw me before, Mr. W. I have sought the same Saviour you serve. I have asked Him to forgive my sins, and He has done so. He will present me to the Almighty. I am going a very delightful journey, to a very happy home, where I shall meet only with the wise and the good. And to be with Jesus! I would not

change my present condition for all the wealth in the world! This has been a gradual thing with me, though I have not had such great joy till now. It is brighter to-day than ever. I have not had a cloud all through my illness. How great is the goodness of God! And all to be had for asking! Nothing to do for ourselves—but to take what God gives us! All made ready for us. Only to humble ourselves and receive. It's so clear, that when once seen, it is impossible to doubt. Press on with vigour. You won't reach perfection here, but seek the Holy Spirit.

W.—'I'm delighted to see you thus, Doctor.'

Dr. G.—'I'm delighted to see you, Mr. W., and all who entertain such views and are sincere like yourself. Learning, riches, fame, are all nothing in comparison.'

W.—'I've often prayed for you, Doctor, when I've passed you in the street. -There's nothing like religion for such times as these.'

Dr. G.—'For *all* times. In health there's no pleasure like this.'

Dr. G. was much interested in listening to some of Cromwell's letters. The following extract especially delighted him:—'Salute your dear wife from me. Bid her beware of a *bondage* spirit. Fear is the natural issue of such a spirit; the antidote is, Love. The voice of Fear is: 'If I had done this; if I had done that, how well it had been with me?'

—I know this hath been her vain reasoning. Love argueth in this wise: what a Christ have I; what a Father in and through Him! What a name hath my Father: "*Merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.*" What a nature hath my Father: He is LOVE; free in it, unchangeable, infinite! What a covenant between Him and Christ, —for all the seed, for every one: wherein He undertakes all, and the poor soul nothing. The new covenant is *grace*,—to, or upon the soul; to which it (the soul) is passive and receptive: *I'll do away their sins; I'll write my Law, &c.; I'll put it in their hearts: they shall never depart from me*, &c. This commends the love of God; it's Christ dying for men *without* strength—for men whilst sinners—whilst enemies. And shall we seek for the root of our comforts within us? What God hath done, what He is to us in Christ, this is the root of our comfort: in this is stability; in us is weakness. Acts of obedience are not perfect, and therefore yield not perfect grace. Faith, as an act, yields it not, but only as it carries us unto Him, who is our perfect rest and peace; in whom we are accounted of, and received by the Father, even as Christ himself! This is our high calling. Rest we here, and here only.'*

* Carlyle's Letters of Oliver Cromwell, Vol. ii. p. 377. The Protector, by Merle D'Aubigné, p. 202.

Dr. G.—'Does Cromwell say that? Read it again. It's what I've been wanting these two hours. I've been thinking, O, if I had not gone to Harrogate, or if I had not gone to Scarborough, I might have been better. How that suits me where he writes—'Fear says, if I had done this, and avoided that: but love says, what a Christ have I! What a Father have I!'

Another letter, which specially interested him, was one addressed by the Protector to his 'beloved daughter, Bridget Ireton'—in which he says, 'Your sister is, I trust, in mercy, exercised with some perplexed thoughts. She sees her own vanity and carnal mind: bewailing it: she seeks after (as I hope also) what will satisfy. And thus to be a seeker, is to be one of the best sect next to a finder; and such a one shall every faithful humble seeker be at the end. Happy seeker, happy finder! Who ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, without some sense of self, vanity, and badness? Dear heart, press on; let not husband, let not anything cool thy affections after Christ. That which is best worthy of love in thy husband, is that of the image of Christ he bears. Look on that, and love it best, and all the rest for that.'*

In the course of the day, Dr. G. asked for Watts'

* Carlyle's Letters of Oliver Cromwell, Vol. i. p. 277. The Protector by Merle D'Aubigné, p. 79.

Hymns for Children, which had been a favourite book from his earliest years. He frequently interrupted the reader with expressions of admiration. His case was beautifully illustrated by the hymn—

How fine has the day been! How bright was the sun,
How lovely and joyful the course that he run!
Tho' he rose in a mist, when his race he begun,
And there followed some droppings of rain;
But now the fair traveller comes to the west,
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best,
He paints the sky gay as he sinks to his rest,
And foretells a bright rising again.

To Mr. K.—"I have seen my own vileness, and sought the Saviour. I cannot tell the place and the time. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." But I know it proceeds from the goodness of God. Mine is a testimony which few can give. The course of my reading has been so curious and strange. I have met with so many quibbles and objections, and my mind has often been in a maze and confusion.'

Mr. K.—'Those things are not profitable.'

Dr. G.—'No! I don't regret that; it has given me a strength I could not otherwise expect. I feel now on so firm a rock, that Satan cannot possibly shake me. But I am not trusting to myself. I

have been always a seeker after truth, though often bewildered in the investigation.'

Mrs. G., remarked, what a mercy it was that he had no clouds to darken, no temptations to harass him.

Dr. G.—'The moment they are suggested I dash them away, and keep my eye fixed on my Saviour; I find him always near.'

Mrs. G.—'Then you feel that—

> Jesus can make a dying bed,
> Feel soft as downy pillows are.

Dr. G.—'Indeed I can! And what a mercy to be able to enjoy conversation, with my memory and intellect as clear as ever. And now that my pain has subsided, I can enjoy my friends. I often expressed a wish to die when my sufferings were so intense, for I had no fear. But I see how much better it was that I did not die then. He knows the best.'

Mrs. G.—'You seem to feel the Saviour so very near.'

Dr. G.—'Indeed I do! If I had not him as my friend, what a dreary departing it would be; but now I am going to a dear, dear friend!'

Mrs. G.—'You have exerted yourself to-day very much, in speaking to every one; but you are so anxious to preach Christ.'

Dr. G.—'Indeed I am! And I think and feel this may be my last opportunity.'

Mr. Knight.—'It is delightful to see you thus.'

Dr. G.—'But how delightful to *feel* thus! The only reason why I wish to live, is to preach the gospel. I should not be ashamed of Christ in public or private.'

During the night he said to his daughter—'I may live one or two days more; but I leave it with God, and wait His will. I have been picturing the flowers nodding over my grave. And when it is windy and rainy, you will perhaps think how dreary it is for me, but remember, I shall not feel that.'

The hymn was repeated—

> How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.

On the closing couplet—

> And may the savour of thy name,
> Refresh my soul in death!—

he said—'It refreshes *my* soul.'

To his faithful man-servant, he said—'I am going to a better country. I hope you are prepared to come too. Seek Christ! He'll be the greatest comfort to you all your days. He is the best friend of man.'

Wednesday, Jan. 17. To the surprise of all, Dr.

Gordon still survived. He was apparently so near his end, that every day was considered to be his last. He was anxious to see as many of his friends as possible, and to lose no opportunity of testifying to the truth and consoling power of religion. He expressed a wish to bid farewell to an elderly man, whom he had known, and greatly respected for many years; and whose uniform kindness of disposition made him universally beloved, but for whose spiritual welfare, Dr. G. felt much solicitude. Mr. * * having come to his bed-side, the following dialogue occurred, which cannot fail of deeply interesting the reader, considering that a dying man, worn to a shadow by a long and painful illness, and who thought himself within a few hours of eternity, took so prominent a part in it:—

Mr. * *—'I am very sorry, Doctor, to see you so ill.'

Dr. G.—'I am very *well*, and very happy. But I rest on Christ. When we pride ourselves on our own conduct'—

Mr. * *—'O Doctor! you have always lived a good life. Every body respects you.'

Dr. G.—'But I must not think of myself; all the merits I have must be thrown aside. You don't understand that. I once did not. My course of reading has been of a very varied and multiplied kind, but I can assure you there is a consolation in

resting your hopes of future happiness on the merits of Christ, which the world has yet to learn.'

Mr. * *—'I know that in these moments, religion is every thing, though I cannot see just as you. I know I must die; and am sensible I shall live again. That future state is a serious consideration. But some think there will be annihilation.'

Dr. G.—'So dreadful do I think annihilation, that I would rather live in pain, than not live at all. There's nothing more dreadful. But I have a better hope. It is beyond human reason—it comes without human reason.'

Mr. * *—'I am sensible that it must be happy to think so. I have been on what I thought my death-bed, as you are, and though I don't pride myself, I thought there was nothing I ever did that I wished I had not done. I never hurt man nor woman, and if that were the last of me, I could die comfortable. But, then, there was the thought of rising again. Ah! I may *die* easy enough, but there's some chance of being called over to account, and there I was bothered; for I thought with Shakespere, that if dying was a sleep, I might have awful dreams. But I can't do as some people, drop down on my knees, and say, 'God be merciful.''

Dr. G.—'You never saw me drop on my knees, Mr. * *.—You said you thought you had never injured any one. Why, my dear fellow, there was

not a day, when I analyzed my life, that I had not done, spoken, or thought evil.'

Mr. * *—'I reconciled myself by thinking, that if I had done evil, I did not know it, and therefore there was no guilt.'

Dr. G.—'There is a right line and a wrong, which does not depend on you. You do not make the straight line.'

Mr. * *—'It's awkward when there are two roads, and you don't know which to take.'

Dr. G.—'There is only one way. A man shews me a straight line; I say it is not straight. My knowledge of geometry proves there is only one straight line. So there is only one circle, right or wrong. So I act, kindly or unkindly. If I think an evil thought of a man, I act unkindly. Human beings cannot act perfectly; but perfection ought to be my standard; and when God requires it, and I don't come up to it, what am I to do? who is to make up my deficiencies? For if one man says he only spoke one unkind word, another may say he only spoke two, so that you may have a world of quarrelling.'

Mr. * *—'Well, it is a consolation to see a man as I never have before, say he dies in hopes of living again. I always felt miserable at such scenes.'

Dr. G.—'Why?'

Mr. * *—'I thought they were dying without

hope. One was a good man, as a member of society; he said—'To-morrow all will be over with me, *all* over, my boy, all over, dead and gone, that's all that can be said of me.' Yet he was a man of very strong mind.'

Dr. G.—'Did you ever see a locomotive engine?'

Mr. * *—'Yes.'

Dr. G.—'Do you think it moves?'

Mr. * *—'Yes.'

Dr. G.—I can prove that it does not, and I defy you to disprove my argument.'

Mr. * *—'Well, but something moves.'

Dr. G.—'It is a delusion. It is not a reality. May you not be deceived? A body only occupies a space equal to itself.'

Mr. * *—'Well?'

Dr. G.—'It cannot hold two spaces at one and the same time.'

Mr. * *—'Well?'

Dr. G.—'Get that into your head.'

Mr. * *—'I see your meaning.'

Dr. G.—'A body cannot move where it is, and it cannot move where it is not. It is stationary where it is, and cannot move where it is not, therefore it does not move at all.'

Mr. * *—'Ah! this is good argument, and sound too.'

Dr. G.—'This argument was employed three thousand years ago, and it is unrefuted yet. Never-

theless, this man says there is nothing after death! Is this man learned?'

Mr. * *—'In some things.'

Dr. G.—'Did you ever see a straight line?'

Mr. * *—'Yes.'

Dr. G.—'If you go to Cambridge, you will find men who will hail you as the greatest discoverer of the age. Have you ever seen a circle?'

Mr. * *—'Yes, I've seen what was called a circle, and I thought it was.'

Dr. G.—'Don't you see how ignorant men are? Were you to calculate the radii of a circle according to those you draw, what imperfect radii would they be! Some would be shorter than others.

M. * *—'But how can you prove there is no straight line?'

Dr. G.—'Easily. Draw one, and take a microscope.'

Mr. * *—'Yes; there will be ins and outs.'

Dr. G.—'Such men should think more.'

Mr. * *—'With all our thinking, we are very ignorant. Pope spoke of this, where he talks about 'teaching eternal wisdom how to rule,' adding—'then drop into thyself, and be a fool.' I've often thought there is truth in that passage where he speaks of shewing a Newton as you shew an ape. But Pope speaks of a man bursting as a bubble, which turns to water, and who can find it again? Yet great men may err. You are a very clever

man, Doctor, quite a philosopher; but the best of us know very little.'

Dr. G.—'Nothing! and it is that utter ignorance which gives me this blessedness now. All my reasoning brings me to this—'I MUST REST ON CHRIST.'

Mr. * *—'Well, I think Him the best person on whom we can rest; I always did. It's a pleasure to hear you talk, for its a very uncommon thing to be very strong in opinion while very weak in body. To your family it must be very delightful to see you like this. I would give worlds to be the remainder of my life, in the same state of mind.'

Dr. G., being greatly exhausted, said faintly, but earnestly, 'Try!'

Mr. * *—'I do in my paltry way. What you say is sincere. There is no humbug about you. What you have, no man could shake.'

Dr. G.—'None!'

Mr. * *—'And he would be a vile man who should attempt. I was glad to hear you say you placed your hopes on Christ. You have often said to me, the Bible told you this and that. I reverence the Bible, but I have often doubted whether it has done good or ill. The New Testament I always considered beautiful. But in the Old Testament, though there are some things good and fine, there are others at which I have shuddered.'

Here Dr. G. was completely exhausted, and

seemed to doze. To save him from further fatigue, the argument was taken up by the writer, who inquired what things those were that were so objectionable.

Mr. * *—'The historical accounts. The Jews being so bad, in spite of such kindness from God. What wickedness!'

N.—'Does not that prove the truth of the Bible, which says, that the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?" What can be a stronger illustration of this, than the history of a nation which was so wicked, though placed in such favourable circumstances for being different? Besides, the Jews were very patriotic, even despising all other nations: and the Prophets who wrote those books, were very patriotic, mourning over the calamities of their nation; yet it is they who record their sins! Does not this prove at least that they were candid and truthful men? Would they have said such severe things against their own party, unless they were sincere?'

Mr. * *—'Well, I see that. They were candid men. But then the plagues of Egypt! and it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart!'

N.—'Just as mercies despised, do harm. It was mercy to Pharoah, to remove the plagues, but he abused it, and thus the mercy hardened him. A kind father makes still more callous the heart of a rebellious child, by the very tenderness which

that child rejects. So, if God sends us an affliction, brings us near to death, and then delivers us from it, if we do not profit by the warning and the mercy, we are the worse for it. Thus God hardened Pharaoh's heart by the very forbearance he showed him, that is, Pharaoh turned God's gifts into curses.'

Mr. * *—'Well, I see your meaning. But how is it that there is no account in heathen writings, of the miracles of Moses?'

Dr. G. had now somewhat revived, and though his eyes continued closed, he had evidently overheard the objection, for he said in a whisper, 'Do you understand the hieroglyphics?'

Mr. * *—'No.'

Dr. G.—'Do they contain no account of them?'

Mr. * *—'I should think not.'

Dr. G.—'But you said just now that you did not understand them. Therefore you cannot know.'

Dr. Gordon was now completely worn out with the effort he had made, and took leave of Mr. * * with a tender grasp of the hand, saying, with a look of deep and affectionate interest, 'May God bless you, Mr. * *.'

Though the narrator has given a faithful account of what was said during this most instructive interview, he feels it is quite impossible to convey any adequate idea of the peaceful composure, the happy assurance on his own account, and the tender soli-

citude for him whom he addressed, which characterized Dr. Gordon's manner, during the whole conversation. It was a scene never to be forgotten. How infinitely superior did that philosophy appear which conducts to the cross for knowledge and for hope, to the scepticism which leaves its votary nothing to rely on but vague uncertainties, and self-righteousness! How touching the admission of Mr. * *, in which the reader, whatever his opinion, must surely unite; 'I would give worlds to be the remainder of my life in the same state of mind.'

Referring to this conversation, in the afternoon, Dr. Gordon observed—'They call men learned and clever, who have a smattering of knowledge, and nothing deep.' An aged Christian was spoken of who thus replied to a clever sceptical opponent:—'I have an argument I defy all the world to refute. Jesus Christ here in my heart, fills me with peace and joy, and enables me to hate sin and love holiness. Talk as you like, you can never shake me, for I *feel* Him within me.' It was observed that this argument, though not enough to convince the sceptic, was quite sufficient to support the believer.

Dr. G.—'That is *the* argument. The grand evidence of the gospel, is its adaptation to our wants. Learned lectures on the evidences, I mean the external, do little or no good. Oh! that learning and sophistry, which call in question the truth of Chris-

tianity, it's all nothing, child's play, a thing for an hour. I could laugh it all to scorn. But the votaries of this sophistry are not to be all denounced as deriders of Christianity. Many are anxious for truth, and unable to find it. They deserve pity. Intolerance is a curse to society. How many things there are, the mere inquiry concerning which would cast a man into the shade! As for Mr. * *, I believe he will die a Christian.'

An aged cottage-saint, from Welton, who had known, loved, and prayed for him, for more than twenty years, made a great effort in a weak state of health, to come and bid him farewell, and hear from his own lips, the answers to her petitions. She brought him a nosegay of flowers from her little garden, but was too much overcome by her feelings, to speak. He said to her, 'I'm nearly gone, but I'm happy. I've found it where you always told me I should.' Being informed, that on leaving him, Mrs. H. had retired to another room, where she had been praying that the gates of Heaven might be open wide to receive him, he replied—'That I'm sure they will. How unworthy I am to be loaded with so much love, and have so many friends!'

Mr. R., one of Dr. G.'s tradesmen, spoke of his being the best earthly friend he ever had; he replied—'I am happy resting on Christ. That alone can give peace. There is nothing in myself.'

Another said to him—'Every one will miss a friend. We all feel such sincere sorrow. You have been so kind to every one.' He answered—'I am glad if I have been of service to any one, though nothing gives me satisfaction, but having Christ. All is imperfect; but He will present me to the Almighty, covered with His merits, and that is enough.'

It being remarked, that he appeared somewhat better, he said, with a peaceful smile—'O, I hope you will consider me a dying man. But I am in the hands of my Creator. He fixed the place and hour of my birth in that room, (pointing to a sketch of Fountains' Hall,) and he has fixed that of my departure out of it, and will receive me in another. I am in his hand, and have no desire but what He wills!'

He spoke of the following hymn, composed by one of his family, to which he listened with great interest, as precisely expressing his own state of mind in reference to his departure:—

My times are in Thy hand!
I know not what a day
Or e'en an hour may bring to me,
But I am safe while trusting Thee,
Though all things fade away.
All weakness, I
On Him rely
Who fixed the earth, and spread the starry sky.

My times are in Thy hand!
Pale poverty, or wealth,
Corroding care or calm repose,
Spring's balmy breath, or winter's snows,
Sickness or buoyant health—
Whate'er betide,
If God provide,
'Tis for the best—I wish no lot beside.

My times in Thy hand!
Should friendship pure illume,
And strew my path with fairest flowers,
Or should I spend life's dreary hours
In solitude's dark gloom,
Thou art a Friend,
Till time shall end,
Unchangeably the same,—in Thee all beauties blend.

My times are in Thy hand!
Many or few my days,
I leave with Thee—this only pray,
That by Thy grace, I, every day
Devoting to Thy praise,
May ready be
To welcome Thee,
Whene'er Thou com'st to set my spirit free.

My times are in Thy hand!
Howe'er those times may end,
Sudden, or slow my soul's release,
Midst anguish, phrenzy, or in peace,
I'm safe with Christ my Friend!
If *He* is nigh,
Howe'er I die,
'Twill be the dawn of Heavenly ecstacy.

My times are in Thy hand!
To Thee I can entrust
My slumbering clay, till Thy command,
Bids all the dead before Thee stand,
Awaking from the dust.
Beholding Thee,
What bliss 'twill be
With all Thy saints to spend eternity!

To spend eternity
In Heaven's unclouded light!
From sorrow, sin, and frailty free,
Beholding and resembling Thee—
O too transporting sight!
Prospect too fair
For flesh to bear,
Haste! haste, my Lord, and soon transport me there!

It was worthy of remark, in his numerous conversations, how emphatic was the testimony borne by Dr. G. to the peculiar doctrines of Evangelical Religion. Studying the Bible for himself, without reference to any theological school, and making no man's creed his standard, the result, expressed in diction free from the phraseology of system, was the clearest testimony to the doctrines of man's guilt and utter inability to save himself; the need of a better righteousness than his own; the love of the Father, manifested in the vicarious sacrifice of the Son; the necessity of the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit; the efficacy of prayer, and perfect

peace as a result of entire dependence on Christ. It was especially observed, whenever his benevolent actions were referred to, as they were most gratefully, by many who visited him, how emphatically he declared his sense of unworthiness, and his reliance on the Saviour alone.

Thursday, 18th. On awaking, he said—'I've had a very happy night; brighter visions than ever of the happy land.' His attached servant and nurse said—'How I wish to be you. I am full of fear of not continuing faithful.' He replied—'There is nothing to fear if you keep close to Jesus. I'll tell you what *I* did. I went *fervently* to Him, and took all my sins and cares, my heart full, and left all at the cross, and sweet peace followed. It's such love! But remember, constant watching is necessary. Thus go to Christ, and you have nothing else to do. It is all done for you. O what a night I've had! such happiness! I cannot describe it. When I fall asleep and when I awake it's always there. How wonderful!'

On being told he seemed a little better, he said: 'Yes, but my disease is progressing. However, I have no wish of my own. But I feel I am a long way on my journey, after many struggles and many difficulties, and I long to be with my Saviour.'

To one of his tradesmen, who, in bidding him farewell, told him with tears of the love which

people bore to him, he said—'I like to be loved, and live in the memories and affections of men. I have tried to love them, for we are all brethren. I am very happy. Hold fast to Jesus—that's every thing. I am sorry you were inconvenienced by calling when I was asleep, but you see invalids cannot control their own time.' This is only one illustration out of many, of his polite and minute attention to others. Nothing was done for him, however trivial, which he did not, in the kindest manner acknowledge; and he frequently expressed his regret for any inconvenience and trouble, which he feared might be occasioned to his attendants or visitors.

In the evening, the conversation turned on various methods of doing good. Dr. G. remarked—'There can be no greater good than doing good to the soul. It is every thing. This would be my delight, were I to recover.' It was observed, that much more good would be done, if preaching the gospel were not so exclusively confined to ministers. It is regarded too much as merely official, and thus the impression of earnestness is weakened. A single word from a Physician to a sick man, would often have much more effect than the visit of a minister, which is expected as a matter of course, to bear a religious aspect. It being said, that though Physicians have great opportunities of usefulness, they would injure their practice by speaking of religion,

except with the poor; Dr. G. observed—'No! the injudicious *manner* might, but not the thing itself. And if it did ——!'

Friday, 19th. Baxters's 'Last work of a Believer,' was one of the books he took great pleasure in listening to. The following sentence which occurred in reading this morning, much struck his mind:—'Did Christ himself on the cross commend his spirit into his Father's hands, and will he not receive *thy* spirit, when thou at death commendest it to him?'

In the course of conversation, he said—'I see where Christians are wrong. We do not make a *companion* of God. We should treat him more as a friend, but not as a distant friend, but as always near, close to us, so that we are never alone, but continually in his company.' This was a topic to which he frequently reverted. Religion is too much separated from ordinary affairs. The special seasons for worship are too distinct from their intervening periods. Such seasons are necessary, but should never be substituted for a *life* of prayer. All things ought to be done religiously. God may be worshipped in the shop, the field, the ship, the exchange, and not merely in the Church. The ordinary doings of daily life, however insignificant in themselves, may be elevated into solemn acts of worship, by being performed in a religious spirit. Thus, the professional man, the merchant, the tradesman, the mechanic, in their ordinary engagements,

may, no less than the clergyman, when visiting the sick, and studying the Bible, and preaching the gospel, "walk with God."

Dr. Arnold well observes,—'The true and grand idea of a church, i. e. a society for the purpose of making men like Christ, earth like heaven, the kingdoms of the world, the kingdoms of Christ; all is lost, and men look upon it as an institution for religious instruction and religious worship, thus robbing it of its life and universality, making it an affair of clergy, not of people; of preaching and ceremonies, not of living; of Sundays and synagogues, instead of one of all days, and all places, houses, streets, towns, and countries.'

Dr. G. remarked—'It is the having God with me as my companion, which has made me so happy. I dislike to sleep, because I lose the enjoyment. O to think I could ever have had a care when there was a God in the world! How wonderful! How wrong I have been! "Behold the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith!" Ah! I did not understand that before. But I do now. How false are the judgments of the

world! Many would pity me. They don't know how happy I am.'

One of his physicians, having called when he felt faint in consequence of having just awaked from a short sleep, remarked that the day was dull, and depressed the feelings. He replied emphatically—'Never mine! it's a very *delightful* day!'

He requested the following beautiful hymn of George Herbert's to be frequently read, his admiration of which, emphatically showed how well grounded he was in the great truth—'by the grace of God I am what I am.'

THE HOLD-FAST.

I threatened to observe the strict decree
  Of my dear God, with all my power and might:
But I was told by one, it could not be;
  Yet I might trust in God to be my light.

Then will I trust, said I, in Him alone.
  Nay, e'en to trust in him, was also his:
We must confess that nothing is our own.
  Then I confess that He my succour is.

But to have nought is ours, not to confess
  That we have nought. I stood amazed at this,
Much troubled, till I heard a friend express,
  That all things were more ours by being His.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.

Saturday, 20. The evening of this day was felt by all to be a peculiarly interesting season, as it recalled the alarming seizure of the preceding week, and the unexpected mercies we had enjoyed in such delightful intercourse with our beloved Friend, during the seven days he had been spared to us. In reference to this, he said, 'I thought I should have been taken from you. We have had many mercies. What a glorious week it has been, the happiest I ever spent. The world cannot comprehend it. I now understand the meaning of the passage, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, *but God hath revealed them unto us, by his Spirit!*" One of his friends bidding him good night, with the wish that he might have pleasant thoughts, he replied,—'Those I am sure to have. I am never afraid of the nights.'

CHAPTER VII.

FROM SUNDAY, JAN. 21, TO SUNDAY, JAN. 28.

CHRISTIAN JOY—CEMETERY—ETERNITY NOT ENTERED ALONE—MYSTERIES—CHRISTIANS NOT POOR—VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH—'BE GREAT AND SEEK LITTLE THINGS'—OPINIONS ON OTHER SUBJECTS UNCHANGED—LIFE OF DR. HOPE—TEE-TOTALISM—DIGNITY, SAFETY AND JOY OF THE CHRISTIAN.

ALTHOUGH it would have seemed scarcely possible, yet Dr. Gordon was evidently still more emaciated than he was the preceding week. Notwithstanding the occasional rallyings which took place, it was obvious that the disease was steadily advancing, but while his little remaining strength became gradually less, and the outer man was perishing, it was delightful to witness how the "inner man was renewed day by day." Two verses, on which he earnestly commented in the course of reading, well illustrated his own experience of "perfect peace," and "joy unspeakable," as the result of simple reliance on the Saviour. "The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and

with my song will I praise Him. Our heart shall rejoice in Him, because we have trusted in His holy name." Psalm xxviii. 7; xxxiii. 21.

This was a topic on which he delighted to dwell. He wondered why Christians were not always rejoicing. He saw throughout the Bible the same great truth, that simple reliance on God, is the means of attaining to spiritual joy. He said—'To believe that God loves us, wishes us to love Him, and does everything to *make* us love Him, to regard Him as a Friend, a Brother, a Father, this must make us happy. As to doubts and fears, I could not have any. I might have many if I looked to myself, but this is impossible, if I look to my Saviour. I have often been surprised that Christians seemed to be made so little happy by their religion. The reason is, they have looked for happiness to what is in themselves, instead of to what is in Christ. And looking to him is the best source of holy living. And then, if this Salvation were only offered to a few, or to those who had committed only trifling sins,—peccadilloes, and had lived moral lives, there would be room for doubt, but it's so full and free, and offered to all, to the very worst, to every one!'

Being told that he looked low and dull, he said, 'I don't *feel* so. I'm weak, but perfectly happy.' It was necessary that he should always be in a reclining attitude, as an erect position might cause

immediate death. Being asked if he did not long to sit up a little in his easy chair, he answered—'I am resigned to the will of God, and have not a desire of my own.' Referring to trials of temper, he urged the importance of making Christ our model. It was suggested that Job was a most patient man, and yet uttered irritable words under provocation. Dr. G. rejoined—'Nay, we must not look to Job, but ask how *Christ* would act.'

About midnight, waking very faint, after a short sleep, his wife, children, and niece, being at his bed-side, he said, 'I think I am sinking. I feel the powers of nature giving way.' Then, looking most affectionately at each, he added—'I think I have said all I wished to say.' Then, after a pause —'I'm so glad they have made the cemetery a garden for my body to rest in, with all the beautiful flowers about.' The conversation then turned on the meaning of the word cemetery, κοιμητηριον, sleeping place, and the application of this term in the New Testament to the Christian's death: "Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*, but I go to awake him out of sleep." "Them also who *sleep* in Jesus, will God bring with Him." In reference to his approaching dissolution it was observed—'This is what we must all come to.' He responded emphatically—'*Must* all come to! Christians should look forward to it with joy.' It was remarked that some persons dreaded death very much, be-

cause they must go forth *alone* into the eternal world, with none of their friends to accompany and cheer them. Dr. G.—'Ah, but I shall not be alone; Christ is my companion, my friend, my brother!' He was reminded how, when we had been absent from home, he had always made some kind preparation to surprise and please us on our return, and how he was always waiting to welcome us. Thus Christ was preparing for him and would be ready to receive him. Dr. G.—'He *accompanies* me on my journey! how wonderful to receive *me* there, one who has so rebelled against him!'

Monday, Jan. 22. He said at different times, 'I am gradually sinking, but I am very happy. I have had such a peaceful night. I marvel at myself, that when in health I should have been so anxious about worldly things, and thought so little of what was to be had so superior. I have always had a respect for religion, and when at school at Ripon, attended the Cathedral with pleasure; but I knew nothing of the true way. O blind, blind, blind!—Make God your *friend*, and don't look on him as a God afar off—but as loving you and determining that you shall be saved. I think he has almost gone out of his way to save me. He has given me blow after blow, and his means have been so especially adapted to my case. When at Scarborough I had something of this peace, but mixed

with doubts and fears, and often with a hope of getting better.'

The mystery of redemption being referred to, he said, 'Aye, mystery, every thing is mystery, but reason no more. What a mercy that I enjoy this peace!' It was suggested that his non-nervous temperament was in his favour; he replied—'Yes, but I am weak enough now to experience all that nervous people feel, if He did not give me His peace.'

To Mr. R. and Mr. V.—'The last week has been happier than I could have conceived. We must leave reasoning. I have read all books on the subject, ancient and modern. You may tell the men who pride themselves on their learning, that it's all nothing. We must come simply to Christ. Christians look too much to themselves. Look to Him, and there's no fear.—We must not think of God as a great Being to be gone to sometimes, but make Him a companion. He wishes it. He has done everything to bring sinners to Him. But it is beyond reason. There's a better evidence than argument. It is *here*. No one could shake my belief.'

In conversation with his brother-in-law, Mr. Anderson, W.S., of Edinburgh, who had spoken of eternity as incomprehensible, he said—'All things are incomprehensible, yet we presume to reason about religion. We know not what an infinitesi-

mal atom of matter is. We can conceive of its infinite division, and yet every particle must have an upper and an under side. Neither do we understand matter in its larger bulks—the immense globes—and so numerous! We know not the end of space nor the end of time. We know nothing. We see with a very contracted view, and yet we reason! We must come to the Bible as little children, then we shall know! We must trust as little children, then we shall not live in dread. How strange that Christians should be afraid of diseases, accidents by railway, and such things, when God is always with them!'

Mr. A. referred to St. Paul's conversion as remarkably illustrating the extraordinary way in which God sometimes arrests sinners in order to save them.

Dr. G.—'*Magna componere parvis*, that is my case. God seemed determined to save me, and, if I may so speak, has been running after me. God wishes us to dwell in the world with Him. He is always asking us to join Him, yet we refuse! Ah! we are foolish beings! "He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live." I am never alone, by night or by day, my companion is always with me. As to what some say, of my possible recovery, how true are the words of Milman:

"It matters little at what hour of the day
The righteous fall asleep—death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die—
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality."

Tuesday, January 23. During the night, Dr. G. had suffered severely from a morbidly voracious appetite. Though greatly enfeebled in the morning, and scarcely able to whisper, he exerted himself to speak to the numerous visitors who came to see him. The following conversation took place:

R.—'We often talk of you.'

Dr. G.—'Talk of the goodness of God to me.'

R.—'How are we to obtain such strong faith?'

Dr. G.—'It is here—we must become as children. I did not understand that once. Only God could make me understand it. My affliction has been sent for this. But, how I murmured! I've been a stubborn child! I wonder that Christians are not always happy.'

N.—'Our faith is so weak, and as you say, we do not make a companion of God. But in Heaven he will be always near us.'

Dr. G.—'He is always near us *now*. Believe this, and it will make you happy."

R.—'I wish I had such faith!'

Dr. G.—'The way is, think nothing about yourself. Give yourself to Him entirely; it is what He wishes. Then you will have perfect peace. But

we must yield ourselves as children, and not reason. I have sent messages to my friends, not to trust in themselves any longer. I have read and thought andtrusted to human wisdom, but O it is very foolish. I am thankful I did not first know this in the extremity of my weakness. It has been weeks, weeks! At first I rebelled at the affliction. O, the blindness! I did not see what it was for.'

To a poor woman who said she hoped God would reward him for all his kindness, he earnestly replied: 'I have no merits of my own. I must look for all in Christ. Seek Him!'

Just before closing his eyes for sleep he exclaimed—'O my God, how good hast thou been to me! I will praise Thee! What peace hast Thou given me! How different it might have been! And what kind friends!'

Wednesday, January 24. To Sir W. L.—'I wonder whether, in case I were to live, these happy views would continue? I don't understand why they should not. What fools men are for caring so much for the world. Should I live, and ever become a poor man, never think me poor; I shall be rich. God is my friend. There is majesty in such a possession. There's poor ——,* what a fool was

* He referred to a Danish gentleman who, for conscience' sake, had been obliged to come to England, and though entirely destitute, with no prospect of employment, was perfectly happy, expressing the fullest confidence that 'his Father would provide for him.'

I! I looked at him as a fanatic. But I don't now. He's a rich man. Never call him poor again. What folly there is in seeking money! The care to get at it, and then the care to keep it! The abject degradation of it!—And to think Christians should be afraid of accidents with such a Friend! I used to be astonished at the great affection some people felt for ministers and others who had been of use in their conversion. I'm not surprised now. I feel so much more love to all my friends. You've been helpers to me in many ways.' He was asked whether we had done right in not more personally urging the subject of religion upon him. Dr. G.—'You have done right. Mine was a peculiar disposition Direct reference would have done harm. I have been disgusted with some Christians by their mode of speaking. You have known my disposition and acted suitably to it. You have preached to me in the best way. It was the right course.'

Thursday, January 25. After a disturbed night, he was much exhausted; this he regretted, as 'interrupting his happy thoughts.' He said—'I'm farther from earth, and nearer to Heaven.' Some passages from Isaiah being read, he commented with much feeling on the gracious assurance—"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for *my own* sake!"

To his family, who were sitting at his bed-side, he said—'What joy I have had! no one can de-

scribe it! I have often told you, when in great pain, that I could not have conceived any human being could suffer so much. I am sure I may now say I could not conceive any human being could *enjoy* so much! And to compare these pleasures with the pleasures of the world! O, how foolish! I have seen all grades of life, but I never found full satisfaction, because I had not got the pearl. I honoured Christianity; thinking it a great and noble thing, but I did not *feel* it. What a difference! Now I feel God is my friend; Christ has covered my sins, I am fit for heaven. I could not dread danger and death. But this is not to be had by reasoning. How true that saying is—"Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven!" But directly we come as children, we obtain everything we need. I never disbelieved—but I did not feel as I now do, the wisdom and goodness of the gospel! What a proof of its truth, that it can produce such a change, and give me such feelings! How its author must have known the heart! Is not this the best proof that it is from God? How could man have invented a system which could do such things?'

On his remarking—'I wonder any one should call death the *dark* valley, it is no dark valley to me,'—he was reminded that Bunyan in his Allegory, represented a state of fierce mental conflict, as the shadow of death, while the approach to the

river, was through the land of Beulah, a region of beauty and bliss. To this he fully assented, for truly it was in such a manner he was approaching the end of his journey; even through 'Immanuel's ground,' which angels visit, where the distant songs of the celestial city are heard, and whence its glittering walls may be clearly descried. Not a cloud intercepted the clear sunshine. By night and by day, whether at ease, or suffering pain, his song was ever of mercy, and his confidence in the Redeemer unshaken.

To his nephew A. A.—'My boy, I love you dearly, and I love your father: he is a good and honourable man; take his advice. Young minds are easily led astray. Seek Christ early. There's no happiness in anything else. Don't care about argumentative books on religion. Your poor uncle Gordon has been taken up with controversy all his life, and it won't do, there's nothing in it. Take the Scriptures as they are, and any simple religious book you like, the simpler the better.'

A. A.—'A poor woman stopped me at the door to ask after you; she was very poor, almost a beggar.'

Dr. G.—'I am very much obliged to her. I like to be remembered by the poor much better than by the rich. I love my rich friends, and am very grateful for their kind attentions, but the poor are my flock. I never courted the rich. Love the poor.

BE GREAT, AND SEEK LITTLE THINGS, DON'T BE LITTLE AND SEEK GREAT THINGS.'

This was very striking and characteristic. Though no one was better qualified than Dr. Gordon, to associate with the wealthier and more refined classes, or possessed tastes more in harmony with all that is courteous and cultivated, yet he saw so much hollowness often concealed beneath a fashionable exterior, that he had learned to estimate the sterling excellences of the mind and heart, though devoid of any external polish, far more than is generally the case with those who move in the upper ranks of society. He had become increasingly alive to the intrinsic littleness of those distinctions of birth, title, property, and rank, on which, however unconnected with genuine excellences, so many pride themselves, and which the world at large generally regard with envy. To be supremely anxious to be thought respectable, fashionable, great, and to be ashamed of the poor man because of his poverty, or of any truth because denounced vulgar, he regarded as an evidence of real littleness. On the other hand, he considered it truly great to dare to seek, and espouse, despite the scorn of the fashionable world, whatever the judgment of truth and love may commend. The cause of the poor, of liberty, virtue, peace, and social progress has been often treated with contempt by the worldly great. Christianity was once so regarded. Genuine piety is so still; but yet how

great are these little things! how contemptible those great ones! Most fully did Dr. G. act up to his own advice—'be great and seek little things.'

Referring to the remark, that he had been too much taken up with controversy, he was asked by the writer, whether his present feelings on religion, had altered his views respecting the political engagements of his former life; and whether by the term controversy, he alluded to those occupations. He answered—'Certainly not; only to controversy on the truth of religion, instead of receiving it as a child. Were I to recover, I should do as I have done in those respects, only *more enthusiastically than ever*, as the cause of truth and human happiness. I hope nothing I have said can give any other impression.'

This is very important, as increasing the strength of his religious testimony, which would have been less valuable, had all his conclusions on other topics been shaken. It might have been said that bodily debility had affected his mind, that he thought morbidly on every point, and, therefore, that little could be deduced from the confessions he made of a religious nature. But the perfect composure he maintained throughout his illness, the calmness with which he always spoke, the deep conviction he retained of the truth of those principles he had so long studied and advocated—this made the more emphatic the striking testimony he bore to the great

truths of the gospel, and to the necessity of receiving it as a little child. Even to within a few hours of his death, incidents were occurring which brought out the characteristic features of his mind, and showed them to be elevated indeed, and illumined by his exalted devotion and strong religious faith, but not changed.

Friday, Jan. 26. Being told of many persons of affluence calling to inquire after him, he asked—'And what *poor* have called? The rich are very kind, but the poor are my flock.' This led him to remark on the truth of the declaration—"To the poor the gospel is preached;" observing that their circumstances in life disposed them to receive a message of such consolation; that their freedom from the bondage of fashion gave them many advantages which its votaries did not possess; and that they were free from the pride of learning and reasoning which hindered others in the reception of a faith requiring child-like simplicity in its disciples, and demanding that "the wise should become as fools," in order that they might be truly wise. Such a system, he said, was too grand and vast to have ever been made out by man's reasoning; it could have come only from God.

On awaking, in considerable pain, he said—'Pray for me, that God may soon release me. It is no doubt the best, that I should remain a little, but I hope it won't be long.' Then, observing that

it was a bright sunny morning, he said—'How glad I shall be to lie in that beautiful cemetery. How lovely it must be there this morning. But when it rains it will be all the same to me.' A letter being read from an old and dear friend, stating that though extremely ill, he would endeavour to come again to see him, Dr. G. said—'Tell him not to come. I can feel for him. I take the will for the deed. We shall meet in Heaven.'

'The Life of Dr. Hope,' deeply interested him. So remarkable was the correspondence between many of their feelings, that the following extracts, among many others which might be made, seemed as though written to describe his own case:—

"It is very commonly said, that illness is peculiarly distressing to medical men, because they see their own symptoms, and, agitated by conflicting hopes and fears, are disqualified from prescribing for themselves. The very reverse of this was Dr. Hope's case. He observed his symptoms with as cool and accurate an eye as he would those of another. * * * He requested Mrs. H. not to mention the possibility of his recovery, for such conversations tended to unsettle his mind, while his spirits were more cheerful when he took an opposite view of the subject. * * * He kept a strip of paper, with which he used to measure the size of his leg, and as it diminished, inch by inch, he used to smile, and to speculate on the probability

of his going before or after July, the time which he had first named. He made preparations for death, as he had done for every important step that he had taken during life. His family could find no more appropriate manner of describing his conduct, throughout the seven months that he still lingered, than that it resembled that of a man who, expecting to set off on a journey, puts everything in order before his departure, and makes arrangements to supply his absence. * * * The remarkable peace and joy with which he was blessed, were unclouded by even one fear or doubt. One day, one of his sisters-in-law inquired, whether he found that illness enabled him to realize spiritual things in a greater degree. He answered, 'Yes, when we approach the invisible world, it is astonishing with what intensity of feeling we desire to be there.' She asked him from what cause. He answered, 'Oh! for the glories'—and then she caught the words at intervals—'When we consider, too, what we now are; how continually we sin—pollution is in every thought—when we analyze our motives, we see sin in them. I did this from such a motive —that, from such another—charity is given with a feeling of self-complacency—the only way is to bring the burden to the foot of the cross, and tumble it down there, saying, 'Here I am.' It is surprising how prominently the promises come out.' With all this joy and peace, this eagerness to de-

part and be with God, there was no enthusiasm or excitement visible in his words or demeanour. His imagination had always been kept in subordination to his reason, and now nothing could have exceeded his sobriety of mind. He drew his hopes and consolations from the Bible alone. From that source he derived the joyful belief that in another world, his renewed faculties and purified nature would enable him to love God more singly, and to serve him more actively, than he had hitherto been able to do. He had also the most vivid anticipations of the reunion of friends.'*

To these passages Dr. G. responded—'This is as if written for me! As Dr. Hope says, "there is peace in Christ if we go to him at once, and tumble down our sins before him." Here I am, a poor, unworthy, wicked creature, not deserving of being looked at by the Saviour, but I can go as I am.'

Mr. K.—

> "All the fitness He requireth,
> Is to feel your need of Him."

Dr. G.—'I have that; I have often said to my dear wife, when returning from seeing Jane, 'There is dear Aunt Knight, always reading those little

* Memoir of James Hope, Esq. M. D., Physician to St. George's Hospital, &c. &c. London, Hatchard and Son.

books you are so fond of. I don't know how it is.' But I know now.'

To Mrs. G.—' What a happy life we have spent together. You will think of the many pleasant talks we have had over the fire alone. And how we've enjoyed our little excursions together? But we're going the same way, and shall meet again. It's only a separation for a short time. When you visit my tomb, don't do it with grief. Perhaps my spirit may be permitted to be hovering round you; and remember how happy I shall be. What a mercy to think that I and those I most love, are all going the right way. I often picture heaven to myself, but I can't describe it. Then I shall have no more toil, no anxiety, no pain, no sin! Oh that sin! What would have become of me now, if I had to appear before God in my own righteousness, which is indeed but filthy rags! But I shall be clothed in Christ's righteousness!' Mrs. G.—' If any one could rely on his own acts, you could; for you have always laboured to do good.' Dr. G.—' But what sin is mixed with every thing! I have been thinking of heaven, wondering who will admit us, and introduce us. But it will be a beautiful land! O what a glorious land! You must be happy to see me so happy.'

He then, with the utmost composure and kind consideration, entered into some minute arrangements for the comfort of survivors; after which, re-

verting to former days, and those simple recreations in which he always took so much interest, he said —'I hope you will visit those places again, and think of me, and don't avoid any thing connected with me. There are your songs, (addressing his daughter) my favourites you'll sing, 'The last rose of Summer,' and 'The light of other days is faded,' that will be very appropriate you know.' Then continuing to look at her with inexpressible tenderness, he added—'I'd rather have died a thousand times than have seen you die, my child. I could not have survived it, the shock would have been too great.'

Saturday, Jan. 27. Dr. Gordon was much weaker. He said to the writer—"I feel I am getting worse, more rapidly than you may imagine. My eyes are getting dim, and my brain shakes. I should wish none of you to be out of the way. Let me see any who call, for my end is certain, and I wish to see my friends to the last. And don't be afraid of waking me, my time cannot be long, and I wish to enjoy your conversation while I can.'

To Mr. Smithard, a devoted temperance missionary,—'I took wine for a few days, as it was urged on me. I complied for the satisfaction of my friends. I wished to perform my duty. But it did me great injury—my testimony is against it—it always was —but my friends would not have been contented, and I now feel more satisfaction myself. I am per-

fectly happy—anxious to go to that blessed country. I said, weeks ago, that I should not recover, and everything I predicted has come to pass.' Mr. S. referred to his many benevolent exertions for the poor, especially in the promotion of temperance, expressing the grief that was felt at the prospect of losing so zealous and powerful a friend to the cause, with the confidence that God would reward him for all the sacrifices which he had made. He replied—'I have felt the cause important, but I am a poor creature—how imperfect—I have no merits—I feel it most deeply. I regret I am too weak to say more at present. Don't forget me. I wish to live in your remembrance.'

To E. R.—'I had no idea there could be such happiness. It is by simply coming to Christ. If you ever meet with men of intellect and study, ask them what they want. It is happiness. Tell them that to get it they must come to the foot of the cross. They can never get it by reasoning, and I am sure that if Christians would take all their burdens to Christ, and take them continually, they would not have so many doubts and fears.'

A long and delightful conversation took place between himself and the numerous members of his family who surrounded his bed. It being remarked that he would do very badly now, without Christ, he replied—'Oh! I could not do at all. I strip off my own doings and cast them down there, all in a

heap. I see the heap just before me, and I see Jesus there too—who has accepted me. Death is rather a herald of good than of evil. In most subjects when I have seen a thing once, I have no more misgivings. But I feel *this* is such *great* truth—I cannot see why Christians should have doubts; Christ comes to us, seeks us, runs after us, sends afflictions to bring us to Him, and why should we doubt? I have been asking my dear wife, whether I properly understand the subject, as I have no doubts, and Christians generally seem to have so many. I could not doubt. It's so plain—Can men be so anxious to be exalted to the presence of royalty, when we may approach the majesty of Heaven? Oh! its abject! its wretched! And we may have this honour even on earth! To think that I should ever have felt flattered, had I been sent for to the palace, when I might have enjoyed the presence of Deity himself! when I might have had hourly intercourse with Him! Was there ever such an imperfect creature!—All the consideration of my own mind, all the analysis I can make of it, proves the truth of Christianity. It so provides for all the wants of the soul. If I were to begin to reason, I could get into a maze, but I am told to come as a little child, and then I find perfect peace. Do you think man could have made such a system? —Once receive it into the heart, and you have

enough evidence there.—And can men be ambitious and avaricious?'

Having prayed together around his bed, and his favourite twenty-third Psalm having been chanted by his request, with the hymns 'Rock of ages,' and 'There is a happy land,' conversation was resumed, when he said—'instead of my own sinful deeds, I rely on Christ. How this would purify my deeds themselves were I going to live—a thing I never saw before. I cannot tell what Satan might do, but I feel my faith such, that I could not do a thing contrary to the will of God. It would so shock me, that I think I could not exist under it. I should wish to be like Christ himself. Thus faith and good works become united. You may be sure I have been taught this in a way extraordinary. It seems all so clear to me.'

It was remarked, that Christians do not always see these truths as clearly as he then did. He replied—'Because we begin to argue and cavil; that's where it is. We are not as little children.' It was observed, that if he recovered, he would find Satan, the flesh, and the world to contend against, and would have to *fight*. He replied—'Yes, but I *could* fight. O I feel what strength that good Saviour has given me.' Being asked if he felt the least fear of dying, he replied—'I meet death as a friend—he will take me to that Saviour who has been so good to me. I feel as if I could stand up to-morrow in

the market-place, and proclaim in a voice of thunder to all the town, what I feel.—How men can keep away from religion, or when once they have faith in Christ do what is against his will, or how they can be unhappy when God is their friend, I don't know; but to me, at present, it would seem impossible. I wonder how Christians can make a trouble of any thing. But O the pride of the world, seeking after great things; if I could see God as my friend, how great should I feel above all the world! O what sweet converse this is, to talk of the goodness of God, and to *me*, so undeserving! There is never any abatement of it. Its love throughout!—I hope I shall have a comfortable day to-morrow, and pass a happy sabbath with my friends.' He fell asleep as we continued to talk, having had scarcely any rest throughout the day.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM SUNDAY JAN. 28, TO SUNDAY FEB. 4.

THE SHEPHERD'S DOG—VARIOUS INTERVIEWS—FUNERAL TESTIMONY—RELIGION IN HARMONY WITH REASON—LORD'S SUPPER—EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE—EXTRACT FROM MR. KNIGHT'S FUNERAL SERMON—NO DEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN—SELECTION OF HIS GRAVE—KIRKE WHITE—ATTENTION TO WORLDLY AFFAIRS—LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE SINNER'S FRIEND—CHRISTIANS REGARD THEMSELVES THE CHIEF OF SINNERS.

SUNDAY, January 28. On awaking, Dr. G. said—'I have been thinking of God as a shepherd. The shepherd sends out his dog when a sheep has wandered from the fold, to bark at, and frighten, and sometimes to bite the wanderer, in order to bring it back. So afflictions and pains are the dogs which our Shepherd sends to bring us back to Him. Some of us are stubborn sheep. I was one of these, and the dog had to bite me; but the barking and biting are to do us good, not harm, and to bring us to the Shepherd.'

The Rev. Dr. Dobbin called to bid him farewell, when the following dialogue took place—

Dr. G.—'This affliction was all for my good, my happiness.'

Dr. D.—'God sends afflictions, that we may remember Him.'

Dr. G.—'Not only that we may *remember* him, but that we may have *joy*. I have had more enjoyment the few last weeks than in my whole life. I could not have a doubt, not one. He saw me a rebellious child. I am a miracle—an example of a marvellous interposition of God. A short illness would not have been enough. He saw I needed all this, and Oh! the blessing that has attended it!'

Dr. D.—'More seems necessary to be done for educated men than for others. They have pride of intellect and of heart to be subdued. But there's only one way.'

Dr. G.—'Only one! I trusted too much to human learning, but when I saw how to get this by coming as a little child, it burst on me in a way I cannot describe. But man could not have taught me this. It was the Holy Spirit of grace. Then it all rushed upon my view at once. I saw Christ my Saviour; stripped off all my filthy deeds, went to the foot of the cross, and Christ presented me to God.'

Dr. D.—'This is the best wisdom.'

Dr. G.—'It is the *only* way. I could laugh to scorn the man who rests in his learning.'

Dr. D.—'The true wisdom is in coming to Christ. This is joy.'

Dr. G.—'And power and majesty. You have a greatness in your soul you never felt before. You have no fear of the world, or death, or anything. You feel God is your companion and friend, cherishing you by constant intercourse. Oh! the hours I have spent of the most delightful kind, such as I never experienced before!'

Dr. D.—'The people of God sometimes feel the truth of what some may think too strongly expressed by Dr. Watts,—

> "The opening heavens around me shine
> With beams of sacred bliss,
> While Jesus shows his heart is mine,
> And whispers, I am his."—

you feel this.'

Dr. G.—'Yes, in the most exquisite way.'

Dr. D.—'It is God who began this work.'

Dr. G.—'I could believe no other. The result proves it. I should desire no stronger proof of the truth of Christianity than my own case. It is so adapted to me. Not that it escaped my investigation before. It was my study daily. But I trusted too much to human learning. But Oh! I am safely landed at last, and in a manner to me most

extraordinary. I have attended in many sick rooms, and heard of doubts and fears, but I have no such things.'

On taking leave of Dr. D., he requested him to conduct the funeral service.

To the Rev. J. Stuart, and Mr. V., he said—'The suffering I have had is nothing, for it has brought to me a happiness I had no conception existed. I have found that God is my friend, loves me, and through Christ, has pardoned me. I have sought Him through Christ. I have seen my entire worthlessness, and He in his great mercy, has filled my heart with His Holy Spirit. Oh that gospel, how it understands the human heart! And to think we should lose such enjoyment when we might have it every day of our lives! How great and noble it makes us! How independent! It takes away all fear of the world, and of death, and you feel at once that God is your friend! No man could have taught me; it came through that great and gracious Being. As to seeking to be religious, I have always been doing that, but I did not seek in the right way. It must be *heart*, not head. Now I *feel* that "The Lord is my shepherd."—I may be thought to use strong terms, but during my whole illness, my head has been as clear as at any former period, and I have taken no opiates.'

In the course of the day, the Author said to him —'You have told us that had it pleased God that

you should recover, it would have been your delight to preach Christ. I have been thinking that you could do this very emphatically at your funeral. Many people, of all descriptions, will be gathered together, and your dying testimony would be very impressive. If you would like to say anything, I will write it down.'

Dr. Gordon—'Oh, I cannot find words sufficient. I am afraid I cannot convey the thing sufficiently. I should be doing injustice to my Saviour.'—He then, after a brief pause, very solemnly and emphatically spoke as follows:—'*All human learning is of no avail. Reason must be put out of the question. I reasoned and debated, and investigated, but I found no peace till I came to the gospel as a little child, till I received it as a babe. Then such a light was shed abroad in my heart, that I saw the whole scheme at once, and I found pleasure the most indescribable. I saw there was no good deed in myself. Though I had spent hours in examining my conduct, I found nothing I had done would give me real satisfaction. It was always mixed up with something selfish. But when I came to the gospel as a child, the Holy Spirit seemed to fill my heart. I then saw my selfishness in all its vivid deformity, and I found there was no acceptance with God, and no happiness except through the blessed Redeemer. I stripped off all my own deeds—threw them aside —went to Him naked—He received me as He pro-*

mised He would, and presented me to the Father—then I felt joy unspeakable, and all fear of death at once vanished.'

This remarkably comprehensive testimony to the truth of Christianity, the method of salvation, the work of the Spirit, and the nature and results of faith, so simple and so emphatic, coming too from the lips of a man known to have been throughout his life, an investigator of all truth, and an enthusiastic worshipper of reason, produced a great impression on the vast concourse assembled at the funeral, and on the far greater multitudes among whom it was circulated, by the reports which appeared in the local papers. May it prove a lasting blessing to many! "By it, he being dead, yet speaketh."

The thoughtful reader will place the legitimate interpretation on the expression—'Reason must be put out of the question.' Similar remarks occur throughout the volume. Dr. Gordon did not of course mean that reason and revelation were not in harmony, or that the intellect was not to be exercised on religion. He had throughout life, read largely and thought deeply on the subject. He did not now regret that long investigation, as it had given him a degree of confidence, which he could not otherwise have obtained.* His inquiries had only

* See pp. 58, 99.

confirmed his conviction, that revelation was in harmony with all truth. He would have been the last to discourage the freest and fullest scrutiny. He stated that one of his principal hindrances had been, the forbidding manner in which Christians sometimes frowned down the objections of sceptical but candid inquirers. His meaning, though expressed in the strong and unguarded terms of a man who feels deeply, was this: that all the efforts of reason are unavailing to produce that spiritual change of which the Holy Ghost is the author, and without which the gospel cannot be experimentally known. He was conscious of an influence totally distinct from the result of a merely intellectual process. He had "become a new creature." While with all the ardour of one who experiences what had hitherto been unknown, he referred to his feelings as constituting an all-sufficient evidence, none could value more than he, the written word; none could be more persuaded of its agreement with the dictates of enlightened reason, and none could more earnestly have recommended the enlisting of every mental faculty in its study. But none were more fully sensible than he became, from his own experience, that we can only understand that word aright, when in the child-like spirit which God bestows on all who seek it, we become learners in the school of Christ. Then the "inward witness" is felt to be superior to any external evidence, however valuable. The

voice of the Spirit in the book, witnesseth with the voice of the Spirit in our own heart, that we are the children of God, and that Christianity is Divine. (Romans viii. 16.) Yet even this evidence cannot be dissociated from reason, in the highest sense of that term, as Dr. Gordon himself clearly saw and often expressed.* The inward consciousness of the believer is the spontaneous testimony of reason herself, divinely enlightened and sanctified. And nothing is more adapted to impress the minds of unbelievers, than the suitability of the gospel to the spiritual wants of man, and its visible effects in rendering its disciples holy and happy.

In the evening, by his spontaneous request, the Lord's Supper was celebrated in his room. He said he did not regard it with any superstitious notions, but felt it a pleasure to be thus associated in Christian communion with the people of God, and to render an act of grateful and obedient homage to Christ, of whose death he regarded this ordinance of the Church, as a memorial. As a friend might wish survivors to do certain things after his decease, in commemoration of him, so Christ said to his disciples—"Do this in remembrance of me." He strongly repudiated the idea of preparation for eternity by an ordinance which was designed not to fit men for death, but to comfort them in life; which

* See pp. 147—150, 162, &c.

was a confession and an aid, but not a communicator of faith and love; an act not constituting men Christians, but to be performed by those who were already such. It united no one to Christ, but was an outward profession of a union already formed, which union, like all other means of grace, it tended to cement and confirm. In proportion only as it was connected with faith, did it profit the participator, even as prayer confers benefits on those alone who penetrate beyond the outward form, to the inner presence, and hold spiritual communion with God. With such views he now desired to 'keep the feast,' not because he felt he was near death, but because he was conscious of that living faith and constraining love towards the Lord Jesus Christ, in the absence of which he had never felt he should be justified in approaching the sacramental table.

The circumstance of its being his first participation in this sacred ordinance, and, as we all thought, his last; together with the intense love to Christ which so manifestly filled his breast, and the conviction that before another Sabbath dawned, he would be in the assembly of the just made perfect, rendered this an occasion of the most thrilling interest to all present. He expressed the great delight he had felt in the service, and said—'that in answer to prayer, God had granted him a most happy day.' Heaven being referred to in connection with the Lord's Supper, he said—'Yes, it is a *feast*, a con-

tinual, everlasting feast.'. We then chanted his favourite Psalm, the 23rd, when he fell asleep.

Monday, January 29. He said at different times, 'I never used to understand the influences of the Spirit, for I sought to comprehend religion only by the reason; but I understand now, by experience, what it means.—There's no good in speculative subjects; keep to the plain truths of the Bible.—O! what a happiness it is to have communion with God! Love to God produces such love to others. Since I felt what I do, I have loved you all so much more, with a love I could not conceive of? O my blessed Saviour, how can I serve Him enough! Were I to live, the Bible should be more my book.'

Taylor's 'Physical Theory of another Life,' and the mode of a separate soul's existence, being referred to, with the remark that it was enough for us that God was aiming to bring our minds into harmony with himself, he replied—'That is *my* preparation; God has been doing it for me, and doing it by afflictions.' In the evening he said—'Do come and talk on these delightful subjects. I cannot say much myself, I am too weak, but I love to listen to you. I feel an assurance of pardon. Am I not scripturally right in *knowing* it? I could not doubt it!' An interesting conversation followed, on the experimental evidence of Christianity, of which the following is the substance:—

Actual experience is the strongest proof in every

case. If a man professes to be able to do such and such things, the actual doing of them is a more conclusive and ready evidence than any chain of argument. Take an electrical machine: prove to a by-stander that the wire is charged, and that by touching it he will receive a shock. The process is long and may be disputed. An explanation may be asked of the nature of electricity, and of every part of the machinery. Evidence may be demanded that the process has been correctly gone through, that the battery is verily charged, and that its connection with the wire to be touched, is unbroken. Witnesses may be required to testify, that they themselves have experienced the predicted effects, and then their veracity or competency, may be called in question. Would it not be a much speedier mode of attaining conviction, to touch the wire and receive the shock? However interesting the investigation, actual experiment must be the strongest and speediest demonstration. Christianity is a machinery of truth, in connection with which exists a mighty though mysterious efficacy, experienced when the soul is brought into contact with that truth, by faith. Evidence is demanded; you are asked to prove the harmony of all parts of the machine, the consistency of truth with truth—to demonstrate the unbroken continuity of the connecting line, the chain of historical evidence—to explain the precise laws by which the shock takes place, the mode in which the

Spirit of God influences the heart. This process is necessarily long, and will suggest many an inquiry which it will be difficult to satisfy. Much will appear mysterious, of which no solution can be given. But if that questioner will by faith, touch for himself, he will at once have an inward witness, which no sophistry can shake. Suppose a man who had never tasted bread, is told that it is good for food, and sufficient not only to sustain life, but to impart strength. He demands proof. He asks how bread is produced; how the seed corn grows up into the blade, and the full ear; how it is converted into flour and bread; whether the loaf before him is verily the identical substance which was grown in the corn field, and not some other which has been substituted for it; what are its chemical qualities, and in what manner it is digested and assimilated; and should he refuse to eat till all his inquiries are answered, he may perish from hunger before the reply is complete. But if he tests that bread by eating it, and finds that he is nourished by it, no denial of its nutritive qualities by others, and no ignorance of the method in himself, can remove the strong conviction which that experimental test has given him. Christian truth is the bread of the soul—imparting life, strength, gladness. Prove, says one, that it is really the same that originally descended from above, and that it has not been corrupted by human substitutions and additions; explain what

seems mysterious about its origin, and make clear to us the method in which it influences him who receives it. However interesting such investigations may be, and even supposing they could be as fully satisfied as those respecting the bread that perisheth; (though even in that instance, there are physical mysteries which no science can explain;) the man who by faith receives into his soul the doctrine of the cross, "that bread of life," has in himself an evidence in the positive effects produced on his spiritual nature, which he feels to be stronger than any other. Instead of debating, let the questioner put the gospel to the test. He will then be more satisfied than by a thousand other arguments. "If any man *will do* His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Dr. Gordon often reiterated this expression—'If I had no other evidence of the truth of Christianity than my own case, it would be sufficient, if all the world were anti-Christians.'

Tuesday, Jan. 30. The night had been stormy. In alluding to it, Dr. G. said—'As I heard the wind blowing, I thought how peaceful and happy to be laid in the cemetery.'

The Rev. Joseph Green, Rector of Owmby, a brother-in-law of Dr. Gordon's, came for the purpose of bidding him farewell, and witnessing for himself that "triumphing over death," the reports of which had so interested and delighted him. He

said in the course of conversation, that there was no one for whom he had prayed so much as for Dr. G.; thinking him in great danger from his intellect, and his habit of requiring everything to be demonstrated, and he feared that even his moral excellence might be a hindrance to his becoming a Christian, which required an acknowledgment of our entire unworthiness in the sight of God. Addressing Dr. G. he said—'You now feel how little you can do without Christ.' Dr. G.—'We can do *nothing*, poor, wretched, ignorant; He can do *everything*.' Mr. G.—'This disarms eternity of its terrors.' Dr. G.—'It *has* no terrors.' Mr. G.—'You must not look within yourself, but to Christ.' Dr. G.—'Ah! but I do *look* within myself, but then I *cast* myself on Christ. I turn to the promises at once. I could not have believed there was such joy. I have smiled at things, I now understand. I love my friends with such a different love, my whole nature seems changed. How Christians can doubt, I cannot imagine. I fly to the gospel, I read what He says, and nothing could make me doubt. How can I, when God sent after us and sought us, when we did not seek Him? If he sought me when I was not seeking Him, He will not forsake me, now I have found Him!'

To the Rev. William Knight, Incumbent of St. James's Church, Hull, the Rev. James Sibree, and the Author, who were at his bed-side, he earnestly

said—'Preachers do not speak of the gospel as they ought; not in terms exalted enough. It is *such* a book! Had I strength to enter a pulpit, I do not know what I would not say of it. I have long been trying to learn it by reason. Never! Never! I see what I saw not before, and feel what I never felt. When a man comes to that book as a child, he will find wonders in it to make him marvel. The love of God is what I cannot describe. So great is it, I could have no doubts and fears. To think that gracious Being has been seeking me, and afflicting me, till he brought me to this happiness! I murmured, but I did not see what he designed—to bring me to that blessed Saviour! All the sayings of the Bible so accord with all I have experienced, that I feel it to be the most marvellous book there ever was in the world. Read every *word* of it, and take it just as it is. I feel my whole mind truly changed. I remember in the first part of my illness, when I saw you all coming in, healthy and vigorous, I inwardly murmured and was envious, but now, I rejoice in your health. I love my friends with a tenfold love; I don't know *how* I feel to them, they are so precious to me.'

As in all Dr. G.'s interviews with his friends it was felt in this instance, that there was much to be learnt, and nothing to teach. Ministers of the gospel were at his bed-side, listening to one, who,

they confessed, knew much more than themselves. He had been so evidently taught by the Holy Ghost, that those who came to see him, felt that he needed no instruction and no consolation from man. Unable to impart, they were delighted to receive. On leaving the room, Mr. Sibree said—'He knows much more than we do.' Mr. Knight replied that he had been in the ministry twenty-eight years, but had never met with so remarkable and wonderful a case. A testimony to the same effect was more publicly given by Mr. K. in a funeral sermon, delivered on Sunday, Feb. 18, in St. James's Church, from which, in corroboration of his own statements, the Author gratefully avails himself of the permission to insert the following extract:—

'Having myself witnessed from day to day, the wonderful power of the Holy Spirit in his gracious work upon the heart of the deceased, I feel anxious to avail myself of the circumstance, as an occasion of illustrating those great evangelical truths, which I am constantly endeavouring to press upon your attention. I shall not speak one word in praise of the deceased, though I might speak many. To his opinions on political and ecclesiastical subjects, on both of which I differed from him, it would be wholly irrelevant to make any allusion. Nor is it at all necessary to enter upon his private and domestic character, or to dwell upon his daily and unremitting exertions as the poor man's friend. All

these points will ere long be before the public, and my silence on them will not be attributed to a wrong cause by any one who is acquainted with the harmonious intercourse, which always existed between myself and my deceased brother-in-law, in private life.

'It was some time after Dr. Gordon's health began to give way, that his friends became acquainted with the fact of a most interesting and important change having passed upon his mind. How long he had been savingly impressed with Divine truth, I cannot take upon me to say; but one thing is quite certain, viz., that his was not a case of death-bed repentance. Repeatedly he said—"This is no now thing, these are no new feelings: I have known them long." I consider this to be a most important feature in the case. We see so many instances of apparent contrition, and turning to God in times of emergency, on a bed of sickness, and in the prospect of death; and we so often see the passing away of serious impressions with returning health, just like the morning cloud or early dew, that it is most difficult to feel any thing like confidence in those cases where persons begin to be religious just when God takes from them the opportunity of being irreligious any longer. How peculiarly consoling then it is, in the instance before us, to know that the gospel was not made the soul's last resource;

that the last days of life were not all that was offered to God by our departed friend.

'It may perhaps be said by some, if the mind had for a length of time been thus savingly impressed, was it not somewhat singular that it was not sooner followed by an open declaration, and especially by the act of Christian fellowship. To such, however, as were acquainted with the deceased, this will easily be accounted for. He was a man who thought very deeply, and investigated the subjects which engaged his attention very closely: and thus it was with the claims of Christianity, and with the character of the gospel-scheme of salvation. He wished to prove all things, and to prove them by experience as well as conviction, before he made that open declaration, which in time, no doubt, would have been made by him, if his life had been spared. Besides this, we generally see, that when persons have lived much amongst those who are religious, without being religious themselves, they are more backward to acknowledge a spiritual change, if haply it takes place in their own hearts, than those persons are who have been differently circumstanced; and then, once more, the inconsistency of professors of religion is very often an occasion of hindering new converts in making an open profession so soon as they otherwise would. They fear, lest they too should dishonour the gospel; they hesitate to wear the soldier's

uniform, though the loyalty of the soldier's heart beats within them.

'The last month of Dr. Gordon's life afforded ample time for the development of the real state of his mind, and nothing could be more decisive and satisfactory than such development was. All reserve was thrown aside, his very soul seemed to be laid open, and his communications were like the distribution of hidden treasures to those who stood around him. During the whole of this period, his delight was to dwell on the rich and glorious provision made for sinners in Christ Jesus. The gospel was always on his lips, and it was remarkable to trace the extreme clearness of his views on all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. He spoke on the Trinity, the atonement, justification by faith, the soul's renewal in holiness, with all the accuracy of the well-read theologian. I never heard him utter an expression which need be either corrected or guarded, and this circumstance shews that he must have been very familiar with topics to which many thought him a stranger. He had evidently studied his Bible with the closest attention, and had drawn truth in all its freshness from the fountain-head; but more than this, it was God's truth in its direct and personal adaptation to man's necessities, which he had learnt, and learnt for himself, under the evident teaching of the Holy Spirit. This knowledge was not merely theoretic, it was deeply ex-

perimental. On one occasion, he said to me, "I am a mass of corruption, but I revel in the atonement." And on another occasion—"Christ is so near me, I seem to see Him, and I feel him too." His love for the Scriptures was most fervent. "That magnificent book," he would say, speaking of the Bible. He was very deeply impressed with a sense of his own unworthiness, and often spoke of the mixture of selfish feelings by which his actions had been frequently actuated, and of his need of the atoning blood of Christ to wash away his pollutions.

"I never saw a more decided instance of a person casting away his own righteousness, and trampling it under foot; Christ was every thing to him; while the breathings of his soul after holiness and sanctification of the Spirit, were intense and fervent. To his dependence upon his Saviour's merits, may be attributed, under God, his uninterrupted enjoyment of spiritual consolation all through his illness. No cloud ever overcast his sky. The valley was irradiated with perpetual sunshine. His experience seemed to stand out to view as a living elucidation of that beautiful passage—"Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." In fact, such was the happy state of his mind, all the day long, and so constantly was he giving utterance to his delightful feelings in the near prospect of heaven, that his chamber seemed like any thing but the chamber of

death. It was indeed good to be there, and no thoughtful person could leave that chamber methinks without breathing forth the silent aspiration, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

'And now, brethren, I leave this remarkable case to engage your serious meditation, as I trust it will do when you return home; it is full of instruction and rich with encouragement; it is not the case of one suddenly wrought upon in the hour of nature's emergency, a case of mere excitement and self-delusion, such as we too often see and hear of; it is the case of a man of literature and science, a man of talent and study, thought and investigation, becoming a little child, and sitting at the feet of Christ to learn from Him what he could learn no where else; it is the case of one whose genuine and healthy faith exhibited its reality in the clustering blossoms and the mellow fruit which it produced; it is the case of one who had sought the Saviour secretly, confessing Him openly; it is the case of one who had over-estimated the value of human attainments, brought to the deliberate conviction, that they were all as dross and dung compared with the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified; it is the case of one who had done homage at the shrine of reason, now bowing to the supreme authority of revelation; it is the case of a man who once thought he had resources sufficient in

himself, taking up the Apostle's language, and breathing it out from the deep recesses of his heart, "By the grace of God I am what I am."'

On awaking after a long sleep, he took the writer's hand, and grasping it tenderly, said—'I feel I am hastening away very rapidly to-day. O that blessed Saviour! How I love Him. Preach him *fervently*, Newman! Speak of that *blessed* book. I must have some more of it—read me some chapters in John.'

Though his mind was so occupied with the great joys and hopes of the gospel, he was far from being indifferent to the most trivial circumstances passing around him. His room was always beautifully adorned with flowers, continually sent to him by kind friends from the country, in the arrangement of which he took much interest. While he was apparently dozing, a conversation in an under tone was going on respecting the treatment of flowers, and a question arose whether it was necessary to change the water in hyacinth glasses. To our surprise, he entered into the subject with animation, saying that the water should be changed; and that salt should be put into the water of cut flowers, because there is salt in the earth, that it acts as a stimulant, and preserves them longer. This is mentioned as only one instance out of many, to show how far was his state of mind from that enthusiasm, which regards with indifference every

thing but the one subject which unhealthily excites it. His care to have the room always preserved in the utmost neatness, his attention to the convenience of all around him, and the kind inquiries he put to his visitors, so adapted to their peculiar circumstances, were features in his case, which gave a peculiar interest to what he said on the greatest of all themes. He was no spiritual hermit, notwithstanding his spiritual fervour, but was still the gentleman, the philosopher, the citizen, the husband, the father, the friend.

To Mr. P., who expressed his surprise at witnessing such composure, he replied—'Confidence in Christ conveys vigour to my heart. Without Him I should be very weak. Attribute nothing of it to me. The man that hopes to be saved by his own works, will have very little peace of mind. He must think of himself as nothing, literally worse than nothing!'

To the Agent and the Secretary of the Temperance Society, who told him how deeply he would be regretted in the town, he replied—'I wish to live in the affectionate remembrance of my friends; but I wish them to have the same enjoyment, and they can only have it by seeking Christ. I thought to-day would be very nearly my last; each day brings with it a symptom of increasing debility. Study that magnificent book, the New Testament. It has never been understood yet. Mr. S. reminded

him that he had always reverenced it, and often referred to it admiringly in conversation with him. Dr. G.—'I never understood it as I have lately.' The hope being expressed that he would spend a comfortable night, he replied—'I never spend any other! I am a marvel to myself. The Almighty himself has given it me.'

In conversation with his family, he said—'How can I help loving Him? I seem to see him with his heavenly countenance smiling on me now. He has pardoned me, washed me, clothed me, is preparing mansions for me,— I feel I *could* not rebel against Him! What are men about when, with such a theme, they can preach such sermons as many of them deliver! There are not only joys to come, but joys in this world. Having Him so near, as a companion, takes from us evil thoughts, ambition, and avarice. He says "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And what are his commandments? Not grievous! There he was, seeking me out first, and not I seeking Him!—And whence came this? By grace we are saved! O think of Christ. How can any one think of himself? Analyze any one act of his life, how imperfect, compared with that pure and spotless Being! But Christ says, though it is so, "though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow!" and He has forgiven me, and clothed me with the robe of His righteousness. It

has come to me in so mysterious a manner. I now see how full of love the whole Bible is!'

N.—'You say this is not to be had by reason. Yet religion is, after all, the highest and best reason, for it is reliance on God, and He must be true.'

Dr. G.—'And more than that. What do men reason for? Is it not to obtain happiness? Then if what is called philosophy and learning does not produce it, but this does, this must be the highest reason.'

Wednesday, Jan. 31.—He had very little sleep during the night, and was much exhausted in consequence, but with his little remaining strength he exerted himself to write on the title pages of several books which he designed as mementos of his affection. It was observable that in these inscriptions, he never omitted his literary titles, an indication that however he condemned human reason, when presuming to supersede Divine teaching, he was no despiser of learning in its proper place. This was only another illustration that he was not *un-made* as a man, in being *new*-made as a Christian.

To Mr. A. who called to see him, he said—'I am prostrate, but reconciled and happy. I have found in Christ a happiness I did not think existed on this side the grave. I have been seeking religion for years by reason, but I could not get it, and I have found it by becoming a little child. That is the secret. Let me advise every man to get it in that

way, then he will see all its beauties. Reason is nothing.—O what joy! People have said that Death is *frightful.* I look on it with pleasure. I see no monsters around me. Death! I see no death at my bed-side. It is that benign Saviour waiting to take me. I could not have a fear. This is not the testimony of one who has nothing to live for. I am in the prime of life, with comforts and friends around me, but the prospect of Heaven is more than all. It is a joy man knows nothing of. O what a magnificent book that New Testament is,—what wisdom there is in it!'

A fear being expressed that he had felt the preceding night very long, through wakefulness, he said—'O no, not long at all. I have been too happy. My thoughts have been in Heaven, and in that beautiful cemetery. I fear I am sinfully impatient in so longing after Heaven, but it is *so* glorious!—*Christ,* not death, is about to take me from earth. There is no *death* to the Christian.—That glorious gospel takes away death.'

It was remarked that the Bible resembled a document written with invisible ink, there being a hidden secret in it, which none can understand, till taught by the Holy Spirit of God. He fully assented to this, saying that he saw and felt its beauty and power, as he had never done before; that though he had always possessed a *sort* of Christianity, it was not such as he enjoyed then; that it came to

him in a manner beyond reason, changing his whole nature; that he now understood the doctrine of the Spirit, which he had never comprehended before, as well as that of the Trinity, but 'not by his *reason*.'

To the Rev. William Knight he said—'Christ is mine! He has promised, will He not be faithful? Then I am safe. Christians have doubts and fears, because they look to themselves. I don't look to myself. I AM A MASS OF CORRUPTION, BUT I REVEL IN THE ATONEMENT. I could not doubt. To think that the Saviour descended from the throne of God, to suffer all the sorrows of humanity, and die, to save rebellious man! Can I doubt when I go to that Saviour? O it would be most sinful! I shall never see Death, that monster so often talked of. It is Christ.—Ponder every verse, every word of that holy book, and in a voice of thunder, pour it into their ears. Tell them to read it simply, as it is, and believe it; to take the words as they are, and not reason. Reason only perplexes. I reasoned: but it was in vain.—It is a proof to me that that book is Divine, because reason could never have written it.'

By his request, the writer had selected a spot in the cemetery for his grave. He wished it to be in a pleasant situation, with flowers growing near. A spot was therefore chosen beside a weeping elm in the centre of the grounds, and beneath the clustering branches of some climbing rose trees. He lis-

tened with much pleasure to a description of it, and examined, with great interest, a sketch which had been taken of it, saying—'I'm so glad you've secured such a beautiful place for me.' His love of elegance and order was singularly exhibited in his request, that there might always be flowers growing over the grave, and that if any palisades should be placed round it, they might be kept neatly painted. His feelings were very similar to those of Kirke White, expressed in the beautiful "Lines written in Wilford Church-yard:"

'Here would I wish to sleep. This is the spot
Which I have long marked out to lay my bones in.
* * *
It is a lovely spot. * * *
Yet 'twas a silly thought, as if the body,
Mouldering beneath the surface of the earth,
Could taste the sweets of summer scenery,
And feel the freshness of the balmy breeze!
Yet nature speaks within the human bosom,
And spite of reason, bids it look beyond
His narrow verge of being, and provide
A decent residence for its clayey shell
Endeared to it by time. And who would lay
His body in the city burial place,
To be thrown up again by some rude sexton,
And yield its narrow house another tenant,
Ere the moist flesh had mingled with the dust,
Ere the tenacious hair had left the scalp,
Exposed to insult lewd, and wantonness?'

Thursday. Feb. 1.—After a restless night, he was moved to a mattress on the floor, that the bed might be arranged for his greater comfort. His body seemed so much reduced that it was astonishing how life and reason could be retained in it. This movement caused him much pain, yet not a murmur escaped him; and when replaced on the bed, he gratefully and cheerfully said—'Admirably done; I have a kind God, and kind friends.'

Though in so exhausted a state, remembering some accounts which were unsettled, he called for them, and his memory was so unimpaired that he discovered a trifling error in one of them, though the transaction had occurred a long time previously. He said he was anxious, as much as possible, to save trouble to those who would survive him. How different was his conduct to that selfish indolence, which often passes for a renunciation of the world, when the world is already beyond the grasp! He regarded attention to those trifles which might increase the comfort of others, as by no means incompatible with his exalted spiritual joys, and the near prospect of eternity. Earth, as long as he remained in it, had duties from which the proximity of Heaven did not absolve; and the pleasure of discharging them was not in the least diminished by his inability to derive from them any personal advantage. It is a mistake to imagine that an angel, living on earth, would take no interest in earthly things. His very

moral excellence would prompt him to a course of conduct in harmony with any circumstances in which his Maker might place him, and the most trifling duties connected with this world, would be associated with the same sacred dignity which characterizes the high praises of the celestial choir. Religion is intended to overturn nothing, but to sanctify everything; not to unfit us for earth by preparing us for Heaven, but by that very preparation, to qualify us for the right performance of present duties, and the right enjoyment of present mercies. The piety which in making the saint, unmakes the man, is rather to be suspected as enthusiastic and incomplete, than reverenced as the highest development of Christian character, which is always found in connection with truth and soberness, and is ever in harmony with all that God has ordained. Much of what is peculiarly esteemed as saintly, is on this account rather to be placed in quite a secondary rank of Christian attainment.

He dwelt much on the text—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief," adding with much emphasis—'Ah, I am chief.' The following letter from the author of the 'Sinner's Friend,' who wrote to him daily, drew from him many similar remarks:—

'My beloved brother,—Now more dear than ever, I learn that you are still detained on this side the

celestial city, the abode of our blessed, and by us, beloved Redeemer. He keeps you here a little longer, that you may bear witness to his saving power, and to that sovereign grace which can change the heart, and cause it to *sing* in the way of holiness; for you *do* sing in tones which excite the joy of angels. Sinners, amongst whom I am the chiefest of the chief, (Dr. G.—'No, I am the chief,') also bless our God on your account; and with adoring wonder gaze at the ransom of another soul, bought with the precious blood of the Son of God. What thankfulness does your case draw from those who have so often presented earnest prayers for your precious soul! *My* poor petitions have long been offered on your behalf, that God would unfold to you his love, and the abundant answer to them has filled me with wonder and praise. You are indeed a wonder to many, but the greatest to YOURSELF. (Dr. G.—'Ah! that I am!') This has been my own case, and a much greater wonder than you, my beloved brother. But, Oh! the magnitude of Divine mercy! Jesus came to save the LOST—therefore I have been found. I meet you, in spirit, with sacred joy every day at one o'clock at the throne of grace, and see the joy beaming in your countenance, and hear you utter the name of Jesus. O this is joyful indeed, and I shall meet you in heaven, we shall be near each other, and though *you* may sing loudly, yet *my* voice will

surmount every other, because I have *more* to say of long-suffering and pardoning mercy than all the sinners in the world. God be praised, 'tis his *own* work. But I am not yet out of the battle, for I have a terrible conflict to maintain every hour; and were it not that the Lord has equipped me (Eph. vi. 11—18,) for the war, I should become a prey to the enemy. But here (John x. 28, 29,) is my strength, which can never fail. Your heart has long been in Heaven, and now your soul only awaits the final summons to be for ever with the Lord. O my beloved friend, with what raptures shall we meet each other then! God be praised that we *know*, by inward evidence, that we are among those who have passed from death unto life, and that nothing can separate us from the Lord!' Dr. G.—'Write to him in reply, that *I* am the greatest sinner; yes, indeed! tell him that!'

A deep conviction of sin is one of the best proofs of Divine teaching. It is neither singular nor extravagant, that eminent believers should, with the Apostle Paul, feel themselves to be "the chief of sinners;" for though the external life of one man may be far less criminal than that of another, yet, as guilt is estimated by God according to the degree of holy motive resisted, every one must necessarily be conscious of more sinfulness in himself than he can know to be chargeable to any one else. Though there *may* be greater guilt than his own,

this is not within his knowledge. As far as his own experience enables him to judge, there is no greater sinner than himself. But so humble an estimate is never formed unless the Holy Spirit has 'opened the understanding,' and changed the heart. This evidence of regeneration was abundantly furnished in the case of Dr. Gordon, who, notwithstanding the external blamelessness of his life, repeatedly spoke of himself, evidently with deep emotion, as "the chief of sinners." He said—'I am so *deeply* sensible of my unworthiness and wickedness! But then I look to Christ, and He has pardoned me, washed me, and clothed me in his robe of righteousness; and why then should I fear? This is why I am now contented and happy, with no dread of death, because, though I see my own vileness, I see Christ as my Saviour. Now that I have got this truth myself, it seems wonderful that any one should refuse to receive it.'

Friday, Feb. 2.—The state of his health being made the subject of conversation, he said—'O speak to me about Christ. I want to hear of *Him*. No other subject interests me so much.' Being asked how he felt as compared with a week before, he replied, 'O I have so little interest in my physical condition, that I don't remember. I've had a delightful night; peace unbroken and indescribable. When once we feel the love of Christ, it gives new views of every thing!'

In the afternoon, he suffered considerable pain, and was evidently much worse. As his family were standing round his bed in much distress, he said—'Don't grieve for me. I feel I could not murmur again. Talk about my blessed Redeemer. His marked kindness to me has been so great. Philosophy do this for me? Absurd! This gives me peace, to hear him say—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."'

Mr. and Mrs. J. V. H. arriving unexpectedly in the evening, from Maidstone, that they might have the melancholy pleasure of bidding him farewell, the following conversation took place:—

Dr. G.—'How kind to come and see so unworthy a creature!'

Mr. H.—'You are a monument of mercy.'

Dr. G.—'I am indeed, I am as black as sin can make me.'

Mr. H.—'We grieve to lose you, but the will of God must be done.'

Dr. G.—'That is what you must say, what I say, every hour.'

Mr. H.—'We ought, not only to submit to, but *acquiesce* in His will.'

Dr. G.—Very earnestly—'I *love* it.'

Mr. H.—'Don't let me weary you, but I love to talk of the grace of God.'

Dr. G.—'I should like to hear it talked of from morning to night.'

Mr. H.—'I am afraid of exciting you.'

Dr. G.—'It does not excite me. I love it. I have had a joy and a peace which I did not know existed. And how did I get it? There's the kindness, the blessing! No clouds, no doubts, no fears, —peace unbroken. I am a marvellous instance of the gracious interposition of a kind God. If He sought me when I did not seek Him, why should I doubt, now I have gone to Him! O that magnificent book!'

N.—'The wise cannot understand it, but only the fool and the babe.'

Dr. G.—'Human wisdom is folly, folly! though I once did not think so. I have felt my degradation and my black wickedness, but He has forgiven me, and washed me!'

Mr. H.—'What a blessing that He "has forgiven us *all* trespasses." They alone know this peace who have tasted it. You have.'

Dr. G.—'I have indeed. If such an impossibility could take place as that I should be restored, nothing could give me the least trouble. I do not think fear of any kind could ever enter my breast. Had I no other evidence than my own feelings, of the truth of Christianity, it would be sufficient. If all the world were Anti-Christian, I should be a Christian'

Mr. H.—'This confidence is from God. Not all the books you have read could have given it.'

Dr. G., emphatically—'Never!'

Mr. H.—'I remember once, thinking it folly to talk of being born again. We knew not what it meant.'

Dr. G.—'But we know now. It is the strong conviction of the truth of Christianity which gives me peace and blessedness. It has so changed my whole nature. This is the evidence.'

N.—'John Newton, when entangled by scepticism, resolved to test the truth of Christianity by seeking the Divine influence promised in answer to prayer, arguing that if the religion were true, the result of such seeking would be an evidence of it.'

Dr. G.—'That is the argument which weighs with me.—No mere reason of man could have written that book. Reason may find *fault* with it, but could not have *made* it. O it *is* a book! read every word of it, and believe it just as it is.'

On taking leave for the night, he said—'Let me see a great deal of you. Constant talk of my blessed Saviour, will be my greatest happiness.'

Mr. H.—'How blessed it is to feel a thrill of joy within at the name of Jesus!'

Dr. G.—'To know it in the *head*, is not to know it.'

Mr. H.—'I have been called mad because I love Christ, and delight to talk of Him continually.'

Dr. G.—'I wish all the world were mad.—My blessed Saviour is always with me.'

He was much fatigued by this conversation, the last of any length in which he was able to take part. The time of his departure was evidently near, and though he suffered no violent pain, seasons of distressing and alarming exhaustion became so frequent, that almost every hour was expected to be his last.

Saturday, Feb. 3.—His faculty of observation continued to be so keen, that on awaking this morning he noticed that a vase on the mantel-piece at the extremity of the room, was not exactly even with the corresponding one, and desired that it might be arranged properly. He shaved himself with a little assistance, and settled a few accounts. He said at different times—'What set of *men* could have written a book so adapted to our wants as the Bible, unless they had been taught by God?—It must be felt in the heart and not merely understood in the head.—I did think mine a hard lot, but since this came to me, I have deeply repented of that wickedness, and thought it a blessed lot. The Lord knew what He was doing with me.—It is only having Christ with me that takes away my fear. What a blessed thing to have Him for your Friend and Brother!—I have much to say, but I cannot speak. Tell them what God has done for me.' In the afternoon, he was so exhausted as to appear on the point

of death. To the remark—'you are going home,' he responded—'I feel at home already.' Then at intervals he added—'What great things the Lord has done for me!—I love Him, and why? because of his love to me.—O what a book it is, meeting you at all points, adapted to all conditions!' It being observed that his learning and wisdom could not have taught him this, he replied—'O my wisdom! a poor, degraded, wicked, ignorant, foolish child! A fear being expressed that though able to say very little himself, so much conversation carried on by others at his bed-side would exhaust him, he said—'No, it does not—it strengthens me—it invigorates me!'

CHAPTER IX.

FROM SUNDAY, FEB. 4, TO HIS DEATH, ON WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7.

DEATH SWALLOWED UP OF LIFE—LORD'S SUPPER—INCREASING DEBILITY—DEATH—CONCLUDING ADDRESS—CHRISTIANITY NOT A DELUSION—WHAT IT TEACHES—THE JOY IT IMPARTS.

SUNDAY Feb. 4.—Dr Gordon was now too feeble to bear any sustained part in conversation. What he said was chiefly an earnest response to what was uttered by others; but the intense feeling concentrated in his emphatic 'aye,' eloquently revealed how strong his faith and how bright his hopes continued to be.

To Mrs. E.—'My gracious God has been very merciful to me. He has given me a joy I never felt before, an inconceivable joy!'

Mrs. E.—'I hope we shall all meet in the New Jerusalem, where there will be no more dying.'

Dr. G., emphatically—'There is none *here*.'

Mrs. E.—'I hope He will give you, to the end, that peace which passeth all understanding.'

Dr. G.—'I *have* it.'

Death was quite lost sight of by him. How striking his reply to the remark, that there will be no dying in heaven,—'there is none *here!*' He looked on departing to be with Jesus, as 'far better.' Death was indeed, in his case, 'swallowed up of life.' The day following, he said to Mr. S., a friend who came from the country to visit him, and who was speaking of the state of his health, 'I shall *live:*'—a reply which to those unacquainted with the peculiar state of his mind, might be regarded as intimating the possibility of restoration to health, but which he meant as a declaration of his conviction, that there could be no death to a believer in Christ. He realized the full import of our Saviour's words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me, *shall never die.*" This was a theme continually referred to in conversation around his bed, and on which he delighted to dwell. He felt that there would be no interval of unconsciousness, no cessation of activity, no intermission of enjoyment; that though the *mode* of existence would be changed, the existence itself would be neither destroyed nor suspended; that to be absent from the body was to be instantly present with the Lord,

and that if life is to be estimated by the exercise of the spiritual faculties, as these will all be vastly augmented when the soul is separated from the corruptible body, that separation is rather to be designated life than death. How much happier would Christians be, did they thus realize the great truths made known to them in the gospel! Christ came to "destroy death, and him that hath the power of death, that is, the Devil; and to deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime, subject to bondage." How very seldom is Death, as such, spoken of in the New Testament! The writers seem to regard it as annihilated in the case of the believer. We live here, surrounded by many mercies, but exposed to many sorrows, and conscious of much imperfection; and surely that great event in our history which transports us to the full possession of the promised inheritance, where no element of grief shall be mingled in the cup of gladness, where no lingering corruption shall interfere with our obedience and defile our worship, where no temptation shall ever demand vigilance and conflict, where no weariness shall suspend our service, but ceaseless activity shall be the rapture of repose, and where death being for ever excluded, eternity will be stamped on every enjoyment,—surely the event which introduces us to such a state of being, cannot correctly be designated, *Death.* No, it is rather *Life.* The dead are

those who are left behind, not those who thus depart, and the moment of dissolution is the birth of the soul. The ordinary sepulchral emblems are most inappropriate to the case of a departed saint. The torch, instead of being reversed and extinguished, now blazes with a living light and quenchless energy it never before possessed. The column instead of being shattered, is now firmly fixed, while its fair proportions and exquisite polish are only now completed. Death is the portal of life, the dawn of immortality, the transition into Heavenly glory. Every Christian may say with Dr. G.—'I shall live!'

Reference being made to the grace of Christ in bestowing His own righteousness on the sinner, while taking away the sinner's guilt, he said,—'It is that which removes all my fear; every particle of fear; nothing else could!' Being reminded that a few days before, he had said, that he did not see Death at his bed-side, and being asked if he saw him *now*, he replied,—'No! it is Christ, who has washed us!' Then, after a few minutes' silence, he said spontaneously and with earnestness, —'I have Christ by me. See Death? I see nothing but Christ.' Sir W.—'You now see the beauty and glory of the plan of salvation.' Dr. G.—'I do—and more—I FEEL it.—I have nothing,—but God and Christ.' N.—'What a happiness to have Christ within you, the hope of glory!' Dr. G.—"I *feel*

Him: I have laid hold on Him; I have embraced Him.—What love to have brought me to this!—I love to hear you talk of that merciful Saviour.' Mr. J. V. H.—'You must not let me tire you, but the love of Christ so fills my heart that it seems as if it would burst, if I did not speak of Him!' Dr. G.—'Let it burst on me!'

By his own request, the Lord's Supper was again celebrated in his room. The beautiful hymn of Dr. Watts' was sung—

'There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain,' &c. &c.

After each verse the children's chorus was sung—

'We're marching through Immanuel's ground,
And soon shall hear the trumpet sound,
O then we shall with Jesus reign,
And never, never part again.
What! never part again?
No, never part again—
O then we shall with Jesus reign,
And never, never part again!'

None but those who have sung such a hymn under similar circumstances, can understand its full meaning and effect. It was a reality. There lay one on the very verge of that 'land of pure delight.' We were bidding him farewell, but were

convinced it was not a final separation, looking forward to that home which death does not invade, and from which 'they go no more out for ever.' The passage of Scripture which was read, was peculiarly applicable to the occasion – "Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of this fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." We all felt convinced, that when next we met at such a celebration, it would be in the "general assembly and church of the first-born" above. At the close of the service, the well-known hymn of Toplady's was sung, 'Rock of Ages,' to which Dr. G. always listened with great interest. Most fully did he respond to the sentiment of the third verse—

'In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace,
Leprous, to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.'

And the last verse was felt to be especially appropriate to his present circumstances—

'While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

Another hymn, in which he was much interested, and which he requested might be frequently read to him, was one of Newton's,—'What think ye of Christ,' to the last verse of which he frequently referred as expressing his own feelings:—

If asked, what of Jesus I think?
Tho' still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say—He's my meat and my drink,
My life and my strength and my store;
My shepherd, my husband, my friend,
My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord, and my all.

While lying in a state of much exhaustion, he suddenly and earnestly asked for a cushion. We thought he wanted it to raise his head a little higher, but to our surprise he said—'For dear aunt to lean on;' having noticed that his beloved sister-in-law was uncomfortably seated and appeared fatigued. So considerate was he, to the very last, of the convenience of others.

As the night advanced, his pulse became so feeble, that it was thought he would not survive till the morning. Yet, in all the intervals of dozing, he requested that hymns and passages of Scripture might be read, frequently uttering an expression of pleasure, and requesting that a mark should be placed in the margin of whatever specially interested him.

Monday, Feb. 5. Contrary to all expectation, he

still survived. On awaking, he asked for something to be read to him on the subject of the crucifixion. He could now speak but very little, though he was never wearied with listening to conversation or reading on those subjects which occupied his thoughts. What he said was chiefly responsive, and very brief. The following will serve as a specimen:—'Is Jesus precious to you now?'—'O yes!' 'You won't be wearied of singing his praises in heaven?'—'No! I shan't!' 'You are clothed with that white robe?'—'I am!' 'Do you feel any fear *now*?'—'Not the slightest!' 'Human reason and goodness as a foundation, would give way at a time like this.'—'It would indeed.' 'Though you are going to a better Friend, you love us still?' Looking round very affectionately at us all, he fixed his eyes on his wife, and said, 'My dear one,' and then holding his daughter's hand, he added—'My darling child!' After this, Mrs. J. V. H., taking leave of him for a few hours, he requested that his right hand might be lifted from under the bed-clothes. This was done hastily, from a fear that the position of the arm might be giving him pain, but his object was to clasp her hand, which he did very affectionately, saying—'You'll not forget it.' Then he added—'I am a marvellous illustration of His goodness!'

He complained of his memory failing, and of double vision. It was very distressing to witness

his extreme exhaustion. He was now unable to turn himself, nor could he be moved for the bed to be made. As we stood beside him, thinking his end was at hand, he said very tenderly to his daughter—'My darling child!'—She replied—'O Papa, what can we do without you!' Dr. G.—'Trust in the Saviour!' He then requested some of those around him to seek repose, saying—'the living must not kill themselves for the dead.'

Tuesday, Feb. 6.—He was again much revived. Several friends called to see him, though he was unable to speak to them, except in monosyllables.

The following poem of Herbert's drew from him strong expressions of pleasure. He requested that it might be marked for further reference:—

A PARADOX.

THE WORSE THE BETTER.

'Welcome mine health: this sickness makes me well.
Medicines adieu!
When with diseases I have list to dwell,
I'll wish for you.

Welcome my strength: this weakness makes me able.
Powers adieu!
When I am weary grown of standing stable,
I'll wish for you.

Welcome my wealth: this loss hath gained me more.
Riches adieu!
When I again grow weary to be poor,
I'll wish for you.

Welcome my credit: this disgrace is glory.
Honours adieu!
When for renown and fame I shall be sorry,
I'll wish for you.

Welcome content: this sorrow is my joy.
Pleasures adieu!
When I desire such griefs as may annoy,
I'll wish for you.

Health, strength, and riches, credit and content,
Are spared best sometimes when they are spent:
Sickness and weakness, loss, disgrace and sorrow,
Lend most sometimes, when they seem most to borrow.
Blest be that hand that helps by hurting, gives
By taking, by forsaking me relieves.
If in my fall my rising be Thy will,
Lord, I will say, The worse be better still.
I'll speak the Paradox, maintain Thou it,
And let Thy grace supply my want of wit,
Leave me no learning that a man may see,
So I may be a scholar unto Thee.'

In the afternoon, by his request, his favourite chants, 'Behold I shew you a mystery,' and 'The Lord is my shepherd,' with the beautiful hymn, 'There is a happy land,' all so peculiarly suited to his circumstances, were sung in an adjoining room, that mellowed by distance, the sound might be the better suited to his debilitated condition.

Mrs. G.—'You are very weak, but are you able, notwithstanding this debility, to take pleasure in

thinking of Christ? Dr. G.—'O yes!' Mrs. G.—'Jesus can make a dying bed, 'Feel soft as downy pillows are,' and that's true in your case.' Dr. G.—'Yes, indeed!' Sir W. L.—'You've no anxiety—no fear?' Dr. G., emphatically—'None!'

The symptoms became very alarming towards evening; and about midnight, as we were all watching round his bed, fearing his consciousness was gone, his daughter, taking his hand, said—'Its your child, father!' Dr. G., with much tenderness—'My great gem!' Then turning to his wife, he said—'And is this Mater?' fixing on her a look of indescribable affection. He afterwards, in like manner, recognised all present individually, with an expression of countenance which can never be forgotten. N.—'Christ is with you.' Dr. G.—'I *feel* Him!' N.—'We are broken-hearted in the prospect of losing you.' Dr. G.—'We shall all live together in Heaven; cleave close to Christ—walk with Him.' N.—'Then He will bring us to you. You see Him smiling on you.' Dr. G.—'Yes, and I *feel* Him.' N.—'Though death conquers your frail body, yet *you* are the real conqueror, through Him that loveth us.' Dr. G.—'O yes!' N.—'Your quick feeble pulse (generally at one hundred and twenty) is hurrying you away, but you are not afraid?' Dr. G.—'No, I never had a fear.' N.—'There is nothing to fear, if Christ is our's. You can say—"O Death,

where is thy sting?"' Dr. G., very emphatically —'I can indeed!'

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2 o'clock, A. M. He called for some refreshment, but the effort of eating was very exhausting to him. From a fear that the light on the tray might distress him, he was asked if it should be removed. Dr. G.—'not while you are here:' implying his wish to look on the faces of his family. He then said—'But when am I to leave you?' N.—'One of our medical friends told us you would not see the day-light.' Dr. G.—'No, I shall live longer than that.' Desiring, but unable to to speak more, N. said—'You cannot talk now, but we know what you would say if you could. Your heart is full of love to us and to Jesus.' Dr. G., very earnestly—'That is it.'

At 6 o'clock, A. M. it was evident from the sudden change which had taken place in his appearance that his end was at length rapidly approaching. E.—'You'll soon be in heaven!' Dr. G.—'Yes, and you'll all follow me, and I'll welcome you. We all hold the same principles.' E. repeated the twenty-third Psalm, and on coming to the verse—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—Dr. G. responded—'Yes, if He were not with me, how dark it would be—but its all light!'

At 8 o'clock, having awaked from a short sleep,

he listened with deep interest, to some of Lavington's 'Sacramental Meditations,' on the love of Christ in first inviting the sinful soul to come to Him for pardon, and then calling that soul to the possession of glory. Passages from the close of Baxter's Saint's Rest,' were also read; Dr. G. manifesting in his beaming countenance, his full concurrence and heartfelt delight, in the sentiments expressed. This was especially the case in reference to the following hymn of Toplady's:—

TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

'Deathless principle arise!
Soar thou native of the skies!
Pearl of price, by Jesus bought,
To his glorious likeness wrought!
Go, to shine before his throne;
Deck his mediatorial crown;
Go, his triumph to adorn:
Made for God, to God return.

'Lo! he beckons from on high:
Fearless to his presence fly:
Thine the merit of his blood,
Thine the righteousness of God!
Angels, joyful to attend,
Hovering, round thy pillow bend;
Wait to catch the signal given,
And escort thee quick to heaven.

'Is thy earthly house distrest,
Willing to retain its guest?

'Tis not thou,—but it must die
Fly, celestial tenant, fly!
Burst thy shackles; drop thy clay;
Sweetly breathe thyself away.
Singing, to thy crown remove,
Swift of wing and fired with love.

'See the haven full in view!
Love Divine shall bear thee through.
Trust to that propitious gale;
Weigh thy anchor, spread thy sail.
Saints in glory perfect made,
Wait thy passage through the shade:
Ardent for thy coming o'er;
See! they throng the blissful shore.

'Mount, their transports to improve;
Join the longing choir above;
Swiftly to their wish be given;
Kindle higher joys in heaven.—
Such the prospects that arise
To the dying Christian's eyes;
Such the glorious vista, faith
Opens through the shades of death.'

His daughter, awaking from a short slumber, after watching all the night, was greatly distressed to see his altered features, and the obviously near approach of death. On her saying—'O what am I to do without you, Papa?' he replied, by directing his eye from herself to her husband, and looking at him most tenderly.

About noon, M. A. R., a friend coming in from the country once more to bid him farewell, he made a great effort to speak, saying, 'Give her a chair,' so politely considerate was he to the very last, of the comfort of others.

Sir W. L. entering his room, was much shocked to witness his altered appearance, and said—'This looks like a *defeat*, Gordon, but it's a *victory*.' Dr. G. emphatically, though in a whisper—'It is!' Sir W.—'We shall often think of you.' Dr. G.—'Thank you!' Sir W.—'You can say—"Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory."' Dr. G.—'Indeed I can.'

N.—'If sin be pardoned, I'm secure
Death has no sting beside;
The law gives sin its damning power,
But—Christ my Saviour died!'

Sir W.—'That's *your* consolation—Christ my Saviour died.' Dr. G.—'Yes, it is!' N.—'We are on this side the river, but Christ is on the opposite bank beckoning you to himself.' Dr. G.—'He is!' N.—'We cannot bear to part, but we shall meet in Heaven.' Dr. G.—'*Christ* is there.' He said this with peculiar emphasis, as if to convey the idea, that however great the joy which the reunion of friends would impart, and none more fully entered into this than himself, yet that the chief joy of the heavenly world, would arise from the presence of Jesus, and resemblance to Him.

He then asked the author to read some favourite hymns, and passages of Scripture, to which he listened with an expression of earnest attention and delight. Several friends having arrived, he beckoned all present to his bed-side, and placing his finger on his mouth, intimated his wish to bid us a final farewell. Such indeed it was felt to be, for those lips to the affectionate and holy utterances of which we had so long delighted to listen, were already cold, and denoting the approach of death. He then said to his attached man-servant, 'God bless you, Tranmer.—He will be with you and be your friend. Persevere in godliness and purity of life.' Then to another faithful domestic, and his nurse, he added, 'You have been a kind friend to me.' He thus manifested to the last that gratitude for the kind offices of servants, and that appreciation of regard from persons of upright character in every grade of society, which had so eminently distinguished him throughout his life.

In order to secure quietness, and a free circulation of air, most of the party now retired to another room. When left alone with his nearest relatives, he said, as if carrying on some train of thought in his own mind—'It's what I like to hear!' Being asked if he meant that it was Christ and His love which he took such pleasure in, he replied earnestly—'Aye!' After a pause, during which his thoughts were evidently intent on the heavenly city

he was so soon to enter, he said—'Repeat that about the great army!' Mr. Knight replied—"I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." The author added—"What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Though he *said* nothing, his expressive countenance plainly manifested that his request had been understood. He was by faith, beholding 'that great army' whom he was so soon to join in celebrating the high anthem of Heaven—"Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for

ever and ever." Prayer was then offered by Mr. Knight, in which we unitedly commended the spirit of our dying friend to the care of his Divine Saviour, praising God on his behalf, for the abundant grace and strong consolation with which he was favoured.

After we had risen from our knees, still considerate for others, he asked if his brother-in-law would take some refreshment--fearing he had not breakfasted. This led to some remarks on the feast of bliss which Jesus was preparing for all his followers, and to which he was at that moment waiting to receive our beloved friend as a guest. To this he replied in a tone of earnest desire—'I wish He would come!'

He then took a most tender farewell of his afflicted wife. To his daughter, who bent over him, in great distress, he said, with inexpressible tenderness—'Bless thee, my child!' 'You love me still, father?' 'Yes, dearly.' He then opened his hand, which had now almost lost its power of motion, for the purpose of receiving hers, which he tenderly pressed together with that of the writer. This was its last act.

After a pause, he said suddenly, but not without considerable effort—'Bring them all.' His meaning not being at first apprehended, various suggestions were made by those around him, respecting the probable nature of his wish, to all of which he

expressed his dissent by a motion of the head. It was very painful not to be able at once to gratify his desire, as he was most anxious to make us understand him, though he now seemed to have entirely lost the power of speech. But making one more attempt, with a desperate struggle he whispered—'EVERY BODY!'

These were his last words. They were an evidence how fully conscious he was, of his being on the point of departure, as well as a final and striking illustration of his thoughtful regard to others. We imagined he might yet survive an hour or two, but, judging from his own feelings that his departure would be immediate, and knowing the melancholy satisfaction of being present at the actual death of a dear friend, of which they might be deprived who had kindly quitted his room lest he should be inconvenienced by a crowd, his last effort of affection was to summon all in the house, into his chamber, which was now filled with sorrowing but silent friends.

It was indeed a solemn season! Grief itself was awed into stillness, by the majesty of death. What event can boast such dignity? It was the exit of a soul! It was his entrance into glory! Angels were there waiting to be the escort! The Lord of angels Himself was present, "He who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of Death and of Hades." He

himself turns the lock, and opens the door, dismissing from this world, and welcoming into the next, the souls of all who believe and obey Him! We felt, as we watched the departure of our friend, that, to use his own beautiful words, it was 'no frightful monster at his bed-side, but that benignant Saviour waiting to receive him."

Increased difficulty of breathing was the only distressing symptom. He appeared no longer conscious of what took place around him. He gazed upwards as in a rapt vision. No film overspread his eyes. They beamed with an unwonted lustre, and the whole countenance, losing the aspect of disease and pain, with which we had been so long familiar, glowed with an expression of indescribable rapture. As we watched in silent wonder and praise, his features, which had become motionless, suddenly yielded for a few seconds, to a smile of ecstacy which no pencil could ever depict, and which none who witnessed it, can ever forget. And when it passed away, still the whole countenance continued to beam and brighten, as if reflecting the glory on which the soul was gazing. Like Stephen, he was, by faith, looking up to Heaven, and with a clearer vision than may be hoped for, till the river of death is well nigh passed, was beholding through the opening gates of glory, "the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." It is not too much to say, that as far as the expression

of holy rapture could contribute to it, like Stephen's, "his face was, as it had been the face of an angel."

Though his emaciated frame, propped up by pillows, was incapable of the least effort, yet such was the effect on the bystanders of his upward, outstretching gaze, that even the motionless body itself seemed to be reaching forward as if impatient for the summons to depart. We saw as much as mortal eye *could* see, of the entrance of a soul into glory. Nothing more could have been given us, but the actual vision of the separate spirit, and its angelic convoy. This glorious spectacle lasted for about a quarter of an hour, increasing in interest to the last, during which the soul seemed pouring itself forth from the frail tenement which had imprisoned it, into the embrace of its Lord. The breathing now became shorter and shorter—then, after a long pause, one last gentle heaving of the chest—and, without a struggle, at two o'clock, the soul had fled!

Was this dying? All present felt that their departed friend had never before been so emphatically alive. How fully were his own words realized, that he should not *die!* There was grief, but no gloom in that chamber. The glory of Heaven seemed to illumine it. The sun had gone down while it was yet day, in full radiance, without a cloud, and the reflexion still rested on those who

had watched its setting. We could not look on that corpse and imagine for a moment it was our friend. It was but the dwelling in which for a little season he had *lodged*. He himself had now entered that "building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The weary pilgrim had landed on the shore of the celestial Canaan, and was welcomed by angels and by Christ. The CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER, having long been TRIUMPHING OVER DEATH, now, 'more than conqueror,' had exchanged the conflict, for the crown of life which fadeth not away. It was rather a translation than a death. He was not, for God took him.

'Thus star by star declines,
Till all are passed away,
As morning high and higher shines
To pure and perfect day:
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
But hide themselves in heaven's own light.'

CONCLUSION.

After the perusal of the preceding narrative, the three inquiries with which it opened, are again respectfully urged on the reader's attention:—*Is Christianity from God? What does Christianity teach? What can Christianity effect?*

Reader, can you close this volume, with the deliberate conviction that the great subject it attempts to illustrate, is a delusion? If so, it can only be owing to the inadequacy of the description, for surely no one could have witnessed for himself that chamber of death, without feeling his scepticism shaken. It was not an ignorant enthusiast who manifested such joy; it was not a despiser of learning who so cast reasoning aside. It was a man of acute and powerful intellect, of varied and profound learning, whose whole life had been spent in investigation, whose independence of thought was proverbial, who during many years had pondered all the objections adduced by scientific men and philosophers, against the divine origin of Christianity, and who pronounced the result to be so firm

a conviction of its truth, that 'though all the world were antichristian,' his faith would still be unshaken.

He had found in the Gospel, what everything else had failed to supply. The necessities of his nature were met. The cravings of his soul were satisfied. Apart from all external evidence, he affirmed the religion itself to be its own witness, in its felt adaptation to human wants and human woes. It made him happy in the midst of severe trials, and though life presented to him every attraction, he was not only resigned, but rejoiced, to leave it.

Some meet death without fear, because they are thoughtless, and consider not the momentousness of it; or superstitious, and rely on frivolous ceremonies to prepare them for it; or self-righteous, and by a vain esteem of their own merits, think themselves in justice secure from all penal consequences of it; or sceptical, and by the theory of sleep or annihilation, take away, in their estimation, the terror of it. It is not surprising that such men should meet death with little dread. But he, entertaining the most ample and vivid conceptions of the solemn consequences of dying; with the judgment-seat, and the final sentence, and the eternal award full in view; conscious of guilt in himself, as he was convinced of the stern integrity of the judge before whom he must stand, and the righteous requirements of the law by which he must be tried; and as devoid of the least superstitious reliance on

any ceremonies, to prepare him for the great event, as he was of the slightest reference to any goodness of his own, as entitling him to an acquittal before the tribunal of a Holy God,—he could still anticipate the approach of what some call the king of terrors, as that of a welcome friend.

Was the religion which, while it admitted the truth of reason's anticipation of a future existence, and countersigned those accusations which every faithful conscience must adduce against its possessor, and recognised the justice of the Omniscient ruler and the holiness of His righteous law; yet at the same time allayed every anxiety, and imparted a blissful hope of endless felicity—was this merely a delusion? If so, how happy are the victims of it! Who might not reasonably wish to be the subject of an infatuation which elevates the moral nature, which dignifies humanity, which qualifies for the discharge of all the duties, and the endurance of all the trials of life, which gives comfort to the sorrowful, and fresh elation to the glad, which can throw such a halo of joy around the pilgrim throughout the journey of life, and enable him to anticipate its termination with hope rather than terror! Yes! be it a delusion, the Christian's portion is nevertheless far to be preferred to that of the unbeliever, and he who should convince him of his mistake, would rob him of that which the wealth of the universe would be insufficient to replace.

If it is a delusion, it is one in which multitudes have shared, not of the ignorant merely, but of the wisest of mankind. The testimony of Dr. Gordon to the felt truth and power of religion, has substantially been given by millions besides, both of the dead and the living; of men in all countries and of all conditions. Add to this experimental evidence, the external and historical proofs of the truth of Christianity, which no subtlety has ever yet been able to refute, but which every fresh investigation tends to strengthen and multiply; and can you be *quite sure* that all is a mistake? You may *suppose* this, but can you *prove* it? Must you not admit that it *may* be true? Is there not a voice within, a moral nature which whispers, despite all your sophistry, that at least there is a *probability* that Christianity is Divine?

Ponder well what that probability involves before you treat it with indifference. It is probable that there is after death a righteous judgment, a Heaven, and a hell; *probable* that the soul will live for ever, and that unless it obtains the salvation provided in the gospel it will be lost! If this is a mere *probability*, since the risk incurred is so tremendously great, is it not the extravagance of folly to neglect the gospel? If men think there is a probability that their property or their lives may be in danger, do they not take precautionary measures zealously and at once? How much more should you, when

there is a probability that the *soul* is in danger! If there is a *probability* of success in any path of commercial enterprise or worldly ambition, how many and how eager are the competitors, though it is only a *may be* and *some* must certainly fail. And if men thus act in reference to the riches that are corruptible and the crowns that fade, should you not much more be earnest when there is a *probability* of winning Heaven with its imperishable glories and eternal joys? Should not the mere *chance*, if it be only a chance, induce you patiently to investigate such a system, and diligently to labour to make its probable advantages your own? For should it eventually prove a delusion, you would have been no loser; but should it be proved to be from God, how infinite your gain if a Christian,—how irremediable your loss, if not!

But it is more than a probability. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word shall not pass away." Be entreated then, reader, however you may boast of the depth of your philosophy and the acuteness of your reason, to study the Bible, as did Dr. Gordon, in the spirit of a little child, seeking to be taught of God, and then in answer to your prayer—"Open thou mine eyes"—you will "behold wondrous things out of God's law."

But if Christianity is indubitably from God, what does it teach? If we are to gather a reply from

the preceding narrative, Christianity is not a heartless assent to any creed or formulary of faith—it is not the punctual performance of a routine of ceremonies—it is not zealous adherence to any particular system or church—it is not a mere course of human virtue, integrity, and benevolence. The Christianity of Dr. Gordon was more than this. Teaching him the evil of his own nature, it led him to seek the renewing and sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God, by whom he became a "new creature, old things passing away, and all things becoming new." Revealing to him his own guilt and his Saviour's grace, it laid him low in self-abasement and godly penitence, while it enabled him to rejoice in the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, and as he himself expressed it, to '*revel in the atonement.*' It displayed the Creator to his view as a God of love, his companion, his friend, his Father, rendering sin against such a Being the object of intense abhorrence, and holiness his greatest desire and delight. The Bible became to him the best of books, prayer the most precious of privileges, the love of Christ the most engrossing of themes, and the prospect of heaven the most transporting of hopes.

Reader, if your's is a religion which allows you to think complacently either of your piety or your virtue; if it does not humble you in the dust of contrition, and cause you to rely on Christ alone

for salvation; if it does not warm your heart with love to God, and render it impossible for you to live in the indulgence of any thing which is displeasing to Him; if it does not make you delight in submission to His authority and in the contemplation of His word—then your Christianity essentially differs from that described in this book. But was not Dr. Gordon's religion that of the Bible? If so, what is yours?

To the inquiry, 'what can Christianity effect?' an emphatic reply is furnished in the "peace which passeth all understanding," and "the joy unspeakable and full of glory," which Dr. Gordon so abundantly enjoyed. Why should such a case be at all remarkable? What reason is there why *all* believers should not thus habitually rejoice? Have they not the same Father, the same Saviour, the same Sanctifier, the same promises, and the same hopes? May not *all* Christians 'make a companion of God!' Has not the blood of Christ washed away their sins? Are they not "accepted in the beloved?" Have they not "received the earnest of the Spirit into their hearts, teaching them to cry, Abba, Father?" Do not all things, sorrows as well as joys, "work together for their good?" Do they not carry about a charmed life which nothing can injure? Is there not care for them in Heaven? Are not angels their ministering spirits? Does not God himself ever watch over them to shield them from

all harm, and supply them with all good? Is not the grace of Jesus sufficient for them, and has not He promised, that "they shall never perish?" Is not death deprived of its sting in *their* case? Is it not true of them that believing in Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life, they shall never die?" Are not mansions of glory preparing for them, to the enjoyment of which death is only the messenger? When that hour comes, will it not be "far better to depart and be with Jesus?"

If men of the world rejoice in those riches and honours and delights which are so unsatisfactory, so uncertain, and so fleeting, should Christians who have such exalted privileges, such boundless possessions, such transporting hopes, ever appear with a sad countenance? Should they not always wear a smile of gladness, and stand on the tip-toe of delight and expectation? Should they not thus prove to the world how much superior is the Christian's portion, even here? Should they not honour the giver of such joy by the fullest appreciation and reception of the gift? If the banquet is so plentiful, should they not comply with the invitation—"Eat, O friends, drink abundantly, O beloved?" We are not only permitted but commanded to rejoice. "Be glad in the Lord, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."—"These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy might be full."—"Finally, my brethren, rejoice

in the Lord.—Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice"!

But how is this to be attained? By simple reliance on the word of God. If we believe what He has spoken, we can neither be afraid nor dejected. He has provided "strong consolation," for all who have "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel." Instead of continually pondering our own guilt and frailty, let us contemplate the all-sufficiency of Christ! Instead of debating, and arguing, and resolving to have every mystery explained, before we derive comfort from the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's word, let us in the humility of faith, and with the simplicity of little children, take God at His word, believe that He loves us, and rejoice in His salvation. This was the secret of Dr. Gordon's peace. Without hesitation, he threw himself on the promises of the gospel, and experienced that "perfect love casteth out fear." To conclude with his own emphatic words, which furnish the best and most comprehensive reply to these three inquiries:—

'I REASONED, AND DEBATED, AND INVESTIGATED, BUT I FOUND NO PEACE TILL I CAME TO THE GOSPEL AS A LITTLE CHILD. THEN THE HOLY SPIRIT SEEMED TO FILL MY HEART. I SAW MY SINFULNESS IN ALL ITS VIVID DEFORMITY, AND FOUND THERE WAS NO ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD AND NO HAPPINESS EXCEPT THROUGH THE BLESSED REDEEMER. I STRIPPED

OFF ALL MY OWN DEEDS—WENT TO HIM NAKED—HE RECEIVED ME AS HE PROMISED HE WOULD—THEN I FELT JOY UNSPEAKABLE, AND ALL FEAR OF DEATH AT ONCE VANISHED.'

THE END.

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